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the weekly

Standard

AUGUST 1, 2011

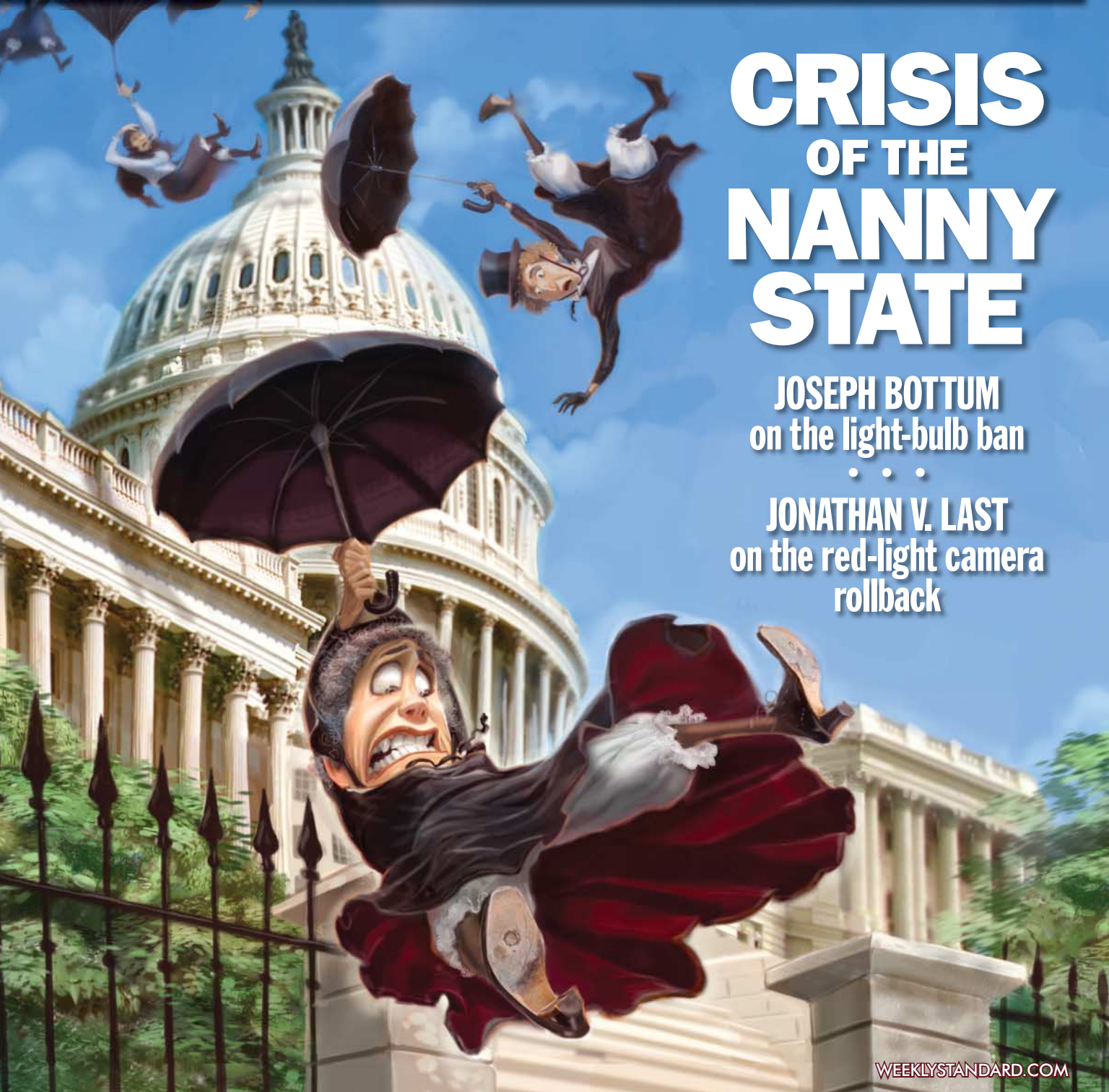
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CRISIS OF THE NANNY STATE

JOSEPH BOTTUM
on the light-bulb ban

...

JONATHAN V. LAST
on the red-light camera
rollback



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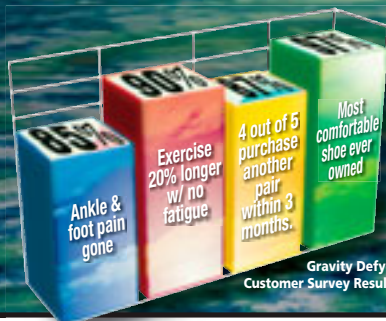
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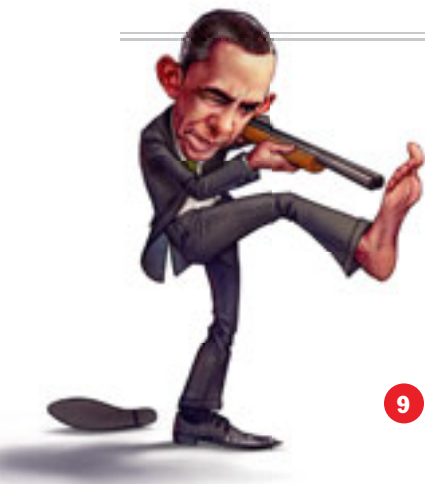
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COVER BY GARY LOCKE

Headache Hysteria

THE SCRAPBOOK was amused last week when it was revealed that Republican representative Michele Bachmann of Minnesota suffers from migraines and occasionally takes medication for them. Not amused by the migraines, of course—from which THE SCRAPBOOK occasionally suffers, too, and which are no fun—but by the fact that Bachmann’s rivals and detractors should have resorted to such a transparent, not to say sexist, device to undermine her presidential candidacy.

On the matter of migraines, at any rate, it didn’t work. The congresswoman was obliged to release a letter from the attending physician of the House, attesting to Bachmann’s good health and the fact that he and a neurologist had evaluated her and (as reported by Philip Rucker and Sandhya Somashekhar in the *Washington Post*) “found that the headaches were ‘infrequent’ and well controlled.” Translation: Like millions of Americans, Bachmann gets migraine headaches, but they would not interfere with her ability to serve in the White House.

The next paragraph in the Rucker/Somashekhar story, however, is one of those passive-voiced/anonymously sourced/brow-furrowing cow patties that make the *Post*’s political reporting so interesting to follow:

The assessment was issued in response to reports that surfaced this week in which former aides, quoted anonymously, said the attacks are frequently incapacitating, raising questions about whether Bachmann is fit to serve as commander in chief.

Note, please, that the initial report in the *Daily Caller* quoted former aides who were never identified, and

who might or might not have ever witnessed Michele Bachmann in the throes of a migraine headache. That’s the beauty of anonymous sources: They can say anything they want about anything they like because there’s no way of verifying, or successfully refuting, what they’ve claimed. Would “former aides”—would anybody out there—have ulterior motives for “raising questions” about whether a presidential candidate “is fit to



Michele Bachmann, fit as a fiddle

serve” as commander in chief? The question answers itself.

What truly amuses THE SCRAPBOOK, however, is the reaction within feminist ranks, and generally on the left, to this episode. There was none. Which is astonishing, considering the circumstances. Here you have a female candidate for president, a lawyer and three-term member of Congress doing very well in public opinion polls, who is suddenly assailed by unconfirmed reports from unidentified sources that she suffers from the vapors and, in the White House, might be collapsed on her divan when the red telephone rings. Suppose such an anonymous allegation had been made about the “health” of Secretary

of State Hillary Clinton, or House minority leader Nancy Pelosi. We can well imagine the uproar.

Indeed, we have witnessed many such uproars—and the Bachmann-migraine story reminded THE SCRAPBOOK of a minor episode in Washington history now 41 years old. In 1970, Dr. Edgar Berman, a prominent surgeon, author, humanitarian, and close friend of Hubert Humphrey, was sitting on a panel of the Democratic National Committee’s policy council when Representative Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii) declared that women’s rights should be the Democratic party’s “highest priority.” But Dr. Berman begged to differ—and went on to explain that the effects of “raging hormonal influences” during menstruation and menopause should preclude women from senior executive positions in government. “All things being equal,” he concluded,

I would still rather have had a male JFK make the Cuban missile crisis decisions than a female of similar age who could possibly be subject to the curious mental aberrations

of that age group.

As might be expected, Patsy Mink’s equilibrium was swiftly unbalanced, even raging, and after several days of protests from feminists and assorted Democrats, Dr. Berman was forced to resign from the DNC council—and with reason. Yet after reading all the whispers and doomsday scenarios and troubling blind quotes about Michele Bachmann and her headaches, THE SCRAPBOOK felt a certain nostalgia for the days, some four decades ago, when the left was quick to defend the right of a woman to seek the highest elective office in the land without scurrilous attacks on her biological fitness for command. ♦

GREG SKIDMORE

Carl Bernstein, Media Ethicist

There are three wars going on, a major bombing in Oslo, the Justice Department has been smuggling thousands of guns to foreign criminal gangs . . . oh, and the United States is about to default on its \$14 trillion debt.

But judging by the American media, the biggest story going is the unlawful behavior of British tabloid reporters in the *News of the World* voicemail hacking scandal. By loudly denouncing the conduct of foreign reporters, American journalists get to discuss how sacred and noble their own conduct is relative to those shifty Redcoats on Fleet Street. The problem is that the ethical conduct of the American media is nothing to celebrate, and in any event, no one really deserves credit for proudly deciding not to break the law.

Well, except when one of the most storied journalists in modern American newspapering builds his career on it. Carl Bernstein, of Watergate fame, has been everywhere denouncing the scandal in the harshest possible terms. “Murdoch’s enterprise has acted like thugs, not like reporters, somewhat like a mafia outfit,” he recently told MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell.

The trouble is, had there been voicemails in Bernstein’s day, we feel pretty confident that he would have hacked them to get the story. The indispensable Mickey Kaus, who blogs for the *Daily Caller*, cracks open his copy of *All the President’s Men* to find the relevant passage:

Bernstein had several sources in the Bell system. He was always reluctant to use them to get information about calls because of the ethical questions involved in breaching the confidentiality of a person’s telephone records. It was a problem he had never resolved in his mind. Why, as a reporter, was he entitled to have access to personal and financial records when such disclosure would outrage him if he were subjected to a similar inquiry by investigators?

Without dwelling on his problem, Bernstein called a telephone



company source and asked for a list of Barker’s calls. That afternoon, his contact called back and confirmed that the calls listed in the *Times* had been made.

Well, you know what they say about those who live in glass TV studios. . . . Nevertheless, Kaus further notes that when writing about the scandal for *Newsweek* Bernstein “buries a defensive paragraph”:

When Bob Woodward and I came up against difficult ethical questions, such as whether to approach grand jurors for information (which we did, and perhaps shouldn’t have), we sought [*Washington Post*] executive editor Ben Bradlee’s counsel, and he in turn called in the company lawyers, who gave the go-ahead and outlined the legal issues in full. Publisher Katharine Graham was

informed. Likewise, Bradlee was aware when I obtained private telephone and credit-card records of one of the Watergate figures.

Just to clear up any confusion, it’s okay for a reporter at the *Washington Post* to break the law if he tells his editors. It’s not okay for reporters at *News of the World* to break the law if they inform their editors. Got it? Good.

While Richard Nixon’s behavior in office was certainly deplorable, that doesn’t mean it was a wonderful day for the country when Woodward and Bernstein set the template for a generation of journalists to come. In Britain, journalists are frequently unethical, vicious, and ideological, but they don’t try to hide their motivations. Thanks largely to the worship of Woodward and Bernstein,

American journalists are frequently unethical, vicious, and ideological—with an extra dollop of nauseating sanctimony on top. ♦

Breeding Like Beckham

Last week's London *Guardian* took a brief respite from its attempt to lynch Rupert Murdoch and turned its attention to David and Victoria Beckham. What did the soccer phenom and the former Spice Girl do to deserve the paper's ire? Well, it turns out that Mrs. Beckham just gave birth to the couple's (dramatic pause) *fourth* child!

Running the headline "Beckhams a 'bad example' for families," the *Guardian* intones:

David and Victoria Beckham may have been overjoyed to welcome their new daughter, Harper Seven, last week but, according to a growing group of campaigners, the birth of their fourth child makes the couple bad role models and environmentally irresponsible.

As the world's population is due to hit seven billion at some point in the next few days, there is an increasing call for the UK to open a public debate about how many children people have.

It's tempting to dismiss the *Guardian's* criticism as simple enviro-Malthusian drivel, but it's actually much worse: It's authoritarianism dressed up as enviro-Malthus. As it happens, the United Kingdom—in fact, all of Europe—has already had the "debate" about fertility rates that the *Guardian* calls for. And the anti-child, environmentalist Guardianistas won!

Today the average woman in the United Kingdom has 1.9 children, less than the number needed to keep the country's population from shrinking (absent immigration). The

U.K. has been below the replacement level—that is, 2.1 births per woman—since 1974. Even when it comes to "aspirational fertility"—that is, the number of children they would have in an ideal world—Brits say that only 2.4 children is ideal. And that number, too, has been falling over the last 40 years. (No European country has a fertility rate above replacement, and in several of them even the "ideal" number is now sub-replacement.)



It's a girl!

Seen in this light, the Beckhams and their four children aren't "encouraging irresponsible behavior." They're dissidents who have chosen to live differently than the reigning ethos demands.

The *Guardian's* chastisement demonstrates that, like other forms of authoritarianism, the environmental movement will not tolerate dissent even on matters which have been settled in its favor. ♦

Must Reading

Elsewhere in this issue, you should check out Helen Rittelmeyer's review of Naomi Schaefer Riley's *The Faculty Lounges*. Riley, as it happens, has had a productive year, also publishing, with coeditor Christine Rosen, a terrific collection of essays called *Acculturated*. Highlighting recent trends in popular culture (unsavory ones, for the most part, if that doesn't go without saying), the book features the likes of Kay Hymowitz writing about YouTube and Eliot Spitzer and Joe Queenan on pro sports.

Not to mention wonderful stuff by such other WEEKLY STANDARD contributors as Judy Bachrach, Emily Esfahani Smith, Bill McClay, and Pia Catton. And worth the price of admission all by itself is the essay by the SCRAPBOOK's colleague Jonathan V. Last on video games as a vehicle for sociability. ♦

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For the Record

Walking around the block recently, looking at the foundation of a new house going up, I remembered one of the most important days of my life. I was five years old. My parents had purchased a house—this was in Queens in 1978—on a double lot. They split the property in two and were building a second house on the empty half. The plan was for us to move into the new house when it was finished and sell the old house.

My father, an architect, had designed the new house, which at this point was only a cement foundation—what would soon be our basement floor, some 10 feet down, with walls that rose to ground level. It looked like a huge open cement box inside a huger hole in the ground. Between the two was a deep trench that filled completely with water when it rained for several days. Work stopped and my two brothers and I were sad. We would not get to see the general contractor, a family friend who always said hi, or the men who operated the machinery and nodded to us as we watched, amazed at the movement of earth and building materials.

One evening the rain let up, and my brothers and I lied to our mother that we were going down the street. Instead, joined by two neighbor kids, Mario and his little sister Edith, we walked onto the construction site to study the long pools of water that had formed around the cement walls. The oldest was Mario, at whose side I had fought many machine-gun battles against German and Japanese armies. Next oldest was my brother Jesse, two years older than me and always boss among the Skinner boys.

As we walked onto the site we were joking about standing too close

to the water and falling in. The joke was, I remember, accompanied by a herky-jerky dance and fake screams, the kind of death throes we acted out while playing war.

Mario and Edith stood back from the water's edge, and I with them. My brothers both moved up to take a look. Chris, my younger brother, who was not quite four years



Chris and David Skinner; inset, Jesse



old, went too close. He slipped into the water and was gone, invisible inside the dark brown pool of standing rain.

I thought that was hilarious, a weird, funny real-life version of our joking. I laughed so hard. Mario and Edith laughed so hard. I don't know if Jesse told me to shut up, but I remember thinking, *Why isn't Jesse laughing?*

Chris came up for a moment, flailing, but he didn't know how to swim. I stopped laughing. Mario and his sister ran away.

Chris went back under, and Jesse jumped in. None of us were swimmers, but Jesse was able to plunge down, find Chris, and bring him to the surface. The difficulty then was climbing up a foot or so of muddy bank. Chris

slipped out of Jesse's arms. Jesse went back down and brought him back up. This happened maybe three or four times. One time Jesse climbed out first, holding Chris by his pudgy arms, and then tried to haul him out that way. It didn't work.

This all took place about 15 feet from the driveway next-door. And through the trees, a Volkswagen pulled up. The young man who was renting

the house got out. I called for his help. For a second he was smiling, not understanding, but then, snap, he was in the water, which was over his head, struggling to hold the wormy wet bodies of my two brothers and push them up the bank. I think he got Chris out first and then helped Jesse. Soon all three were out, soaked, and it was over.

According to my mother, my brothers and I didn't mention anything when we got home. But a day later the man from next-door came to see my parents and told them what had happened. His version I fully accept. He got out of his car; two kids were drowning; he jumped in to save them. All true. For years this was the only version my parents ever told, until at some point I was, by sheer repetition, able to wedge my fuller account into the family record.

Before the young man from next-door saved them, my older brother Jesse saved my younger brother Chris, finding him in the dark rainwater and pulling him up to the surface, repeatedly, both of them gasping for air. Jesse saved Chris. First. Or perhaps I should say, also.

Today my brothers are grown men. Jesse's a plumber with his own business. And Chris is a police officer who in his spare time carries on the family tradition of investing in real estate. For having laughed, I have always felt it was my job to remember what happened.

DAVID SKINNER

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Republican Virtue

O tempora, o mores! O Cicero, if thou couldst be with us now! The corruption of our age is approaching that of your own! Who today speaks for the ancient Roman—and modern American—virtues of civic duty and personal responsibility?

Here's who: the House Republicans.

The federal government has a problem. It's hitting a debt ceiling limit passed into law last year by the Democratic Congress, and signed by President Obama. It's doing so because of appropriations passed by that same Democratic Congress, and signed by that same Democratic president. Have the president and Senate Democrats proposed any legislation to deal with this problem? No.

House Republicans, on the other hand, did pass a budget earlier this year. Unfortunately, federal spending has gotten so out of control that even if the Republican budget were to become law, the federal government would have to borrow more money for several years to come. So House Republicans last week stepped up to the plate (to use a metaphor that might be unfamiliar to Cicero).

Their constituents hate the idea of voting to raise the debt ceiling. But the House GOP did what had to be done. They passed H.R. 2560, the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act of 2011. The legislation contains a debt ceiling increase and accompanies it with serious spending cuts, restraints, and the promise of a forthcoming vote on a constitutional amendment to balance the budget by capping spending. The House Republicans (and five Democrats) did their duty, in accordance with the procedures of Congress and in the light of day, proposing and passing legislation that their fellow citizens could read, debate, and judge.

And they are the only ones who've done their duty. Having failed to pass a budget for two years, Senate Democrats have done nothing to deal with the debt limit. President Obama has in effect withdrawn his February budget proposal, and hasn't submitted a new one.

So the morally bankrupt leaders of our fiscally bankrupt government meet feverishly behind closed doors, out

of sight of the public they're supposed to represent, to figure out how to paper over the mess they've created. Gangs of senators occasionally emerge from their hideouts to announce deals that would raise taxes and gut defense in response to a crisis caused by domestic spending and entitlements. The gangs roam the halls of the Capitol, invading television studios in order to terrorize the citizenry with the prospect of default and mayhem. They then

retreat to their lairs, while Beltway insiders shower them with praise and scorn actual legislation passed by the House in accord with the norms of democratic government.

Enough! No more gangs! No more deals! Gangster government is unworthy of a democratic republic. We elect leaders, not dealers. These elected officials are responsible for the fiscal future of the United States. They aren't negotiating with foreign enemies, when secrecy is often necessary. They aren't authorizing covert intelligence operations, which have to be planned behind closed doors. They are supposed to be accountable to the people—much as many of our elites may resent that fact.

And so: All honor to the House Republicans. They refuse to conceal

their views and aims. They openly declare how fiscal solvency and budgetary probity can be restored.

Meanwhile, liberal elites (and some conservative ones) tremble at the prospect of an honest debate on how to restore sound and responsible government. So, on July 22 Senate Democrats voted, 51-46, to table the Cut, Cap, and Balance Act. No amendments were proposed or debated. No alternatives were offered. Democrats now stand before us as the party that, when faced with a deadline and a crisis, vote to . . . table.

For the next year and a half, real progress on the budget will be limited by the president and the Senate majority we have. The debt limit presumably will be increased, and the best House Republicans may be able to do is to insist on some spending cuts, prevent defense from being gutted, and keep tax burdens from rising.

Still: All honor to the House Republicans, who had



Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106 BC–43 BC

the coolness, foresight, and capacity to introduce and pass legislation that is a rebuke and a stumbling block to the gangs of senators and the secret dealmakers. And to lay the groundwork for victory for the forces of limited and responsible government in 2012.

—William Kristol

Free Syria

The week of August 1 marks the beginning of Ramadan, the monthlong celebration that for many Muslims is the central event of the calendar. Where daytime fasting is the most arduous aspect of the season, especially when the holiday falls in midsummer, that discipline is alleviated come sundown, when families and friends gather to break the fast, feast, pray, and talk.

For Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, however, Ramadan will be a leaner month: a month of Fridays.

Since March, the uprising against Assad has gathered steam every Friday, as Syrians pour forth from their mosques and other meeting places and take to the streets to demonstrate against the regime in Damascus. Ramadan will string 30 such days together in a row, a prospect that must be daunting for a regime astonished that its murders, tortures, collective punishments, and mass detentions have not yet silenced the opposition.

Even as Assad's security services and paramilitary forces moved from city to city to put down the uprising, the opposition gathered steam. When snipers picked off the townspeople of Deraa, Baniyas stood up; when tanks and artillery fired on Homs, Hama took to the streets. In Deir al-Zour, Bou Kamal, Latakia, and many other cities, the opposition has lit up like a string of lights encircling the regime.

Assad's ruthless campaign against the country's peaceful opposition is thus also a march against time and space, a war that he cannot win. No one knows for sure when the regime will fall. Maybe Assad will survive Ramadan. But it is unlikely he can outlast an opposition that shows few signs of fatigue or fear after almost five months of rebellion.

On the international front, from Jerusalem and Riyadh to Paris and Ankara, the assessment is that Assad is doomed. Even the White House has shown signs that it has given up on a regime it once saw as a cornerstone of its Middle East policy. Luring Assad away from Iran, the White House believed, would weaken the Islamic Republic; getting him to the negotiating table with Israel would fortify President Obama's image in the region.

Then U.S. ambassador to Damascus Robert Ford

traveled to Hama to show solidarity with the protesters. After pro-Assad activists retaliated by attacking the American embassy, Hillary Clinton finally declared that, from the American perspective, the regime had lost legitimacy. It seemed the administration's Syria policy had shifted once and for all.

Recent days, however, have brought mixed signals from the administration, which have sowed confusion in Washington just as Damascus is girding itself for war against its own people.

A report in the *Washington Post* suggested that Ford and Clinton had acted on their own, without coordination with the White House. And, in fact, the president softened Clinton's position by saying Assad was *increasingly* losing legitimacy. Moreover, Obama took Washington out of the equation by saying that it was in the eyes of Assad's own people that the dictator's legitimacy had come into question. And even more bizarrely, a White House spokesman told reporters that the administration is still looking to pressure Assad to "meet the aspirations of the Syrian people"—a statement not merely tone deaf, but morally obtuse.

It is characteristic of the Obama White House to wish to fade into the background. And in this case, it is understandable that the president does not wish to be the pacesetter of change in Syria. Not all of Syria has gone to the streets. But to believe that the entire country must erupt before American policymakers can be certain of a consensus is to misunderstand the courage of the men, women, and children who have already taken fate into their hands. The opposition has already made its stance clear, not merely by braving the regime's depredations for nearly half a year, but in doing so peacefully. Assad does not have their consent to rule them and he will never have it. So what is Obama waiting for?

Let's be clear: The uprising in Syria is turning out to be one of the central events of the young century.

To talk about social media and the Arab Spring is to miss the significance of what's happening. Facebook and social media networks have hardly altered the tempo of the regime's violence. They have only made clear to young Syrians what they're in store for when they take to the streets. Those who note that Bashar al-Assad is not as brutal as his father Hafez might recall that the massacre at Hama, where tens of thousands were killed, was the culmination of a civil war that had been underway for several years. In five months, Bashar has killed thousands already. Who knows what the future has in store?

What we're seeing every day in Syria is remarkable. It is the opposition that has made Syria matter. Now is the time for Obama to commit America to stand with a peaceful movement that is undoing an authoritarian regime that is a state sponsor of terror and a proxy for that larger threat, Iran—a regime opposed to the United States, our interests, our allies, and our principles.

—Lee Smith

He Can't Help Himself

Obama would rather pander than win.

BY FRED BARNES



The path to ratification by Congress was greased after President Obama renegotiated trade treaties with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama. Obama would supply Democratic votes. Republicans were already on board, President Bush having put together the treaties in the first place. It had the look of a done deal.

It wasn't. In May, the White House suddenly insisted the treaties be accompanied by roughly \$1 billion in Trade Adjustment Assistance, or TAA as it's known in Washington.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of
THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Organized labor was demanding TAA funds be set aside for workers whose jobs might be lost as a result of the treaties. Obama took up the cause.

That wasn't the last of labor's demands. A month ago, labor officials said TAA had to be part of the trade agreements themselves. Again, Obama went along. This was unprecedented. Spending legislation had never been included in trade bills. Republican support instantly collapsed. It took the intervention of Senator Rob Portman of Ohio and a few other Republicans to get things back on track by stripping TAA from the treaties. Separate votes on the

three pacts and TAA are likely in September. But don't hold your breath.

There's a pattern here that's become emblematic of the Obama presidency. A mark of a strong president is the capability to act decisively in his own behalf, especially when his political interest coincides with the country's. Obama lacks that trait. More often than not, he's indecisive, particularly when liberal special interests exert pressure on him.

It's happened on the long-delayed approval of a new oil pipeline from Canada and in the president's negotiations with congressional Republicans on raising the debt limit. In both those cases, as with the trade agreements, Obama put an important initiative in jeopardy, at least temporarily, to assuage or accommodate interest groups.

The trade treaties represent a twofer for Obama. By itself, ratification would be a significant achievement. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates the treaties would produce 380,000 American jobs. The Obama administration puts the figure at 250,000. It's unclear whether any jobs at all would be lost. Yet the president balked.

By championing the treaties, the president would demonstrate his willingness to dismiss labor's demands when they clash with the national interest. Not only would the economy get a boost, but relations with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama would be strengthened.

The Keystone XL pipeline from the oil sands in Canada to refineries on the Gulf Coast is another win-win issue for Obama, if only he'd embrace it. Canada is America's leading foreign supplier of oil. The more Canada exports to the United States, the less we're forced to rely on unfriendly folks in the Middle East and on Latin American countries (Mexico, Venezuela) whose oil production is declining. With the new pipeline, Canada would increase its exports by as much as 700,000 barrels a day. (The United States consumes 10-11 million barrels daily.)

A permit to build the pipeline was

DAVE MALAN

requested nearly three years ago by TransCanada. Because it would cross an international border, approval must be granted by the State Department. This was expected to be a snap, particularly after gasoline prices reached \$4 a gallon. White House aides thought so, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton indicated she was ready to approve it.

Then the environmental lobby, led by the Natural Resources Defense Council, began a campaign against approval, and the Environmental Protection Agency joined in. It criticized the State Department's first environmental impact statement, which found the pipeline would have little effect on the environment. Clinton buckled, and a second impact statement was ordered. Last month, EPA said the new study was "inadequate."

Besides oil, the Keystone project would create 20,000 jobs directly and 118,000 "spin off" jobs, according to TransCanada, and invest \$20 billion in the American economy. Even if those projections are exaggerated, it's clear the pipeline would be an economic boon. TransCanada has also signed building contracts with four labor unions.

So one might think that Obama would be eager to break the logjam and take credit for standing up to an interest group he's normally allied with. His statement practically writes itself: "Today, I have moved to increase oil imports from our neighbor Canada. This will lower gasoline prices at the pump, increase our energy security, reduce our dependence on unreliable and unfriendly oil-producing countries, and create tens of thousands of jobs here in America."

But no. Obama has dawdled as environmentalists and the EPA crank out more objections to the pipeline and the so-called "heavy oil" it would carry. Last February, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper appealed for approval when he visited Obama, but the president ignored the issue when they appeared before the press. At the earliest, a permit will be issued late this year. But that assumes another interest group doesn't lean on a complaisant president. ♦

Elizabeth Warren, Closet Conservative

The most misunderstood woman in Washington.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL



Obama and Warren: Thanks, you can go now.

President Obama's nomination of former Ohio attorney general Richard Cordray to head the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau may finish off the brief political career of the most eccentric and poorly understood figure of the finance crisis. It was Harvard law professor Elizabeth Warren who dreamed up the CFPB in 2007, and it was she who spent the past year running it. Now she will return to Cambridge, either to teach or to run for Senate against Republican Scott Brown.

It is not surprising that Warren found no place in Washington. The cameo role she played on the national stage made her an idol to the leftmost part of President Obama's coalition and a hate object for conservatives

—and yet her understanding of the financial crisis is best described as populist, conservative, even right-wing. It arises from what has happened to the American middle class in the past four decades.

Warren's Harvard affiliation is something of an incognito. By her own account, she comes from an Oklahoma family whose only claim on the adjective "middle class" was its avoidance of the word *ain't*. When she was 13, her father, a maintenance man, had a heart attack and had to stop work. Her mother got a job in the catalog-order department at Sears until he was well enough to return. Going bust was something her family narrowly avoided. Warren has devoted the last decade of her career to explaining why those who wind up in similar positions today are seldom so lucky.

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

NEWS.COM

In 2003 Warren cowrote a brilliant and counterintuitive work of pop economics called *The Two-Income Trap*. People were going bankrupt at an alarming rate. Since the 1990s, more children had experienced their parents' bankruptcy than their parents' divorce. And yet the economy was booming. So senators like Orrin Hatch seemed to be on solid ground when they attributed these bankruptcies to people who "run up huge bills and then expect society to pay for them." Warren herself later said she was looking for some failure of self-control, for "too many Gameboys." But this was not the case. Bankruptcy was actually getting *harder* to declare, Warren proved. For bankrupt families, the ratio of nonmortgage debt to income rose from .79 in 1981 to 1.06 in 1991 to 1.5 in 2001. To quote, italics and all, the most stunning line in her book: "*Having a child is now the single best predictor that a woman will end up in financial collapse.*"

Why this was so had nothing to do with consumerism. Parents spent 32 percent less on clothing, and 52 percent less on appliances. What they spent more on was big necessities: mortgages (up 76 percent), cars (up 52 percent), taxes (up 25 percent), and health insurance (up 74 percent). And the reason for all but the last of these was the entry of women into the workplace. Working mothers "ratcheted up the price of a middle-class life for everyone, including families that wanted to keep Mom at home," Warren wrote. As a result, she showed, two-income families have less disposable income than one-income families did in the old days. What is more, today's families are deprived of a safety net—a spare worker—of the sort her own family was able to lean on when she was a child. If anything goes seriously wrong in your average two-earner family today, they are in grave financial jeopardy.

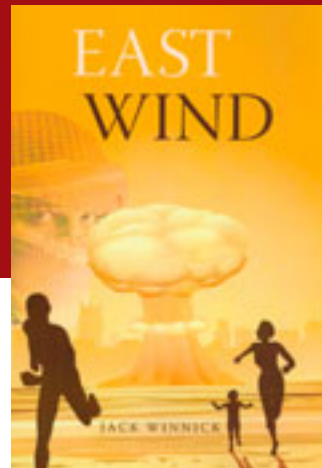
You can euphemize this account any way you like—and God knows Warren tries—but Michele Bachmann would find nothing to object to in this narrative. It is a straightforward telling of the Tragedy of

Feminism, tinged with populism. Warren's explanation for exploding real estate prices involves white flight: "As families saw urban centers as increasingly unattractive places to live," she writes, "the range of desirable housing options began to shrink and parents' desire to escape from failing schools began to take on new urgency." She complains that the federal safety net "serves only one segment of the population: the poor. . . . But what about the middle class? What is their safety net?" She calls for school vouchers. At times, her complaints on behalf of the middle class sound positively Nixonian.

But Warren's understanding of our present predicament has a second part that is less archetypally right-wing, and this is the part that got more notice after the crash of 2008. It concerns the belief that banks are ever doing their best to rip people off and cheat them out of their money. Invited by the late Oklahoma Democrat Mike Synar to work on a congressional bankruptcy commission, she discovered some of the ruses banks used to trap people in punitive lending arrangements. No one who has applied for a credit card recently will be inclined to disagree with her, and the ruses have grown worse since then. Consider those 7.9 percent credit card rates that increase to a 29.9 percent "penalty rate" once you miss a payment by a day. Or those 18-page Bible-paper documents with all sorts of important account changes written in 7-point type, one of which explains that your account is about to be cleaned out via hundreds of dollars in arbitrary fees.

The real heyday of subprime had not yet begun when Warren wrote her book, but its principles were already in place in the banking industry. Almost anyone who uses a bank will have a story of making a \$1,000 deposit drawn on a bank across the street, meant to cover four \$200 checks written two days later and cashed four days after that—and seeing the bank put a hold on the deposit just long enough so they can collect \$35 "bounce" fees on each of the four

When terrorists threaten to blow up American cities...



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States, detonated one small nuclear dirty bomb in a major U.S. city and are threatening further attacks if the U.S. does not cease its support for Israel.

-- **Lee Bender, Philadelphia Jewish Voice**
"East Wind" tells the story of an attack on Los Angeles that leaves America in panic, as the FBI & CIA must act fast to save America from giving into the demands - abandon Israel. A riveting thriller with real world connections, **"East Wind"** is a fine read, and highly recommended.

-- **Midwest Book Review**

East Wind is available at:
 Firesidepubs.com Kindle.com
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checks (although the checks do not actually bounce!).

Warren was outraged at such chicanery long before the economy tanked. That is why she retains so much credibility among neutral observers, and why her approach to the finance crisis took the consumer-protection form that it did. It may not have been the most effective way of approaching the finance crisis, but it was the way most Americans understood. You could tell there was a finance crisis because real banking—i.e., borrowing at low interest and lending at high—was disappearing from the American system, replaced by this sneaky game of devilish tricks and arbitrary penalties.

Unfortunately for Warren, no one was in a position to promote her politically for her pains. She was the only white working-class Democrat left in captivity. Republicans saw her as a Naderite and also someone who might steal a bit of their own thunder. Democrats saw someone who was quite possibly a Democrat only through Ivy League peer pressure or lack of self-knowledge. Almost every step the Obama administration took in the early stage of the crisis pitted its own heavy hitters against her. When Warren was involved in the congressional TARP oversight panel, she quarreled with Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner over why the insurer AIG was bailed out in such a way as to make whole all of its creditors—notoriously including Geithner's friends at Goldman-Sachs. She was right and won the argument. Geithner was more strident and won the battle.

There were good reasons for the president not to nominate Warren, including the ones advanced by congressional Republicans. That anyone should run a bureau of his own design is an affront to the spirit of separation of powers. Warren understood economics less well than many of her congressional interlocutors, and she understood diplomacy less well than any of them. But she understood the finance crisis better, she was the first to see it coming, and she did so by the simple means of listening to the American middle class. That is not nothing. ♦

The Noble Lie, Feminist Style

False accusations of rape are more common than you think. **BY CATHY YOUNG**

We will probably never know for sure what really happened between former International Monetary Fund chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn and the chambermaid who accused him of sexually assaulting her in a Manhattan hotel room on May 14. In the days after the French politician's arrest, media commentary was strongly on the side of the alleged victim, and any attempt to question her credibility was met with indignation.

This month, reports that the case against Strauss-Kahn is near collapse after revelations cast serious doubt on the woman's truthfulness have produced an equally swift backlash. Connections to French politics, meanwhile, and charges of sexual misconduct against Strauss-Kahn back home further complicate the picture. But whatever the outcome, the unraveling of the prosecutor's case has revived the inflammatory issue of false accusations of rape.

The phenomenon of false rape allegations is an ultimate feminist taboo; indeed, leading feminist legal theorist Catharine MacKinnon has stated that "feminism is built on believing women's accounts of sexual use and abuse by men." In some instances of political correctness run amok at universities, students and professors have been accused of "harassment" for so much as raising the possibility of false accusations in class or in online discussions. While orthodox feminists grudgingly admit that women sometimes make false reports of rape,

they insist that such cases represent a minuscule share of all complaints and that to give them much attention is to perpetuate misogynistic "rape myths" and revictimize real victims.

There is no question that the subject of women "crying rape" tends to bring the misogynists out of the woodwork (as a look at Internet discussions of Strauss-Kahn's travails will easily confirm). It is also true that the "women don't lie about rape" myth arose in reaction against a history of often suspicious and demeaning attitudes toward rape victims: As late as the 1970s, juries in rape trials in California and several other states were instructed to treat the complaining witness's testimony with special caution and to view "unchaste character" as a strike against her credibility.

Nonetheless, the fact remains that women do lie about rape much more often than the feminist party line allows. Advocacy literature typically claims that about 2 percent of rape complaints are found to be false, the same rate as for reports of other violent crimes. But that figure seems to have no basis in research. According to the FBI, about 9 percent of rape reports are dismissed as "unfounded," without charges being filed. While advocates claim that this is often because the authorities lack proof or distrust reports of acquaintance rape, dismissals due to insufficient evidence usually occur further down the pipeline. Generally, an "unfounded" complaint is one in which the accuser recants or her story is contradicted by available evidence.

Gauging the true prevalence of false accusations is extremely difficult, particularly since rape reports are handled

Cathy Young is a contributing editor to Reason magazine and a columnist for RealClearPolitics.com.

and recorded differently from one jurisdiction to another. But what reliable information is available suggests that the figure is not insubstantial.

In a particularly controversial study published in 1994, now-retired Purdue University sociologist Eugene Kanin found that 40 percent of rape reports filed in an Indiana town over a 10-year period turned out to be false by the “victim’s” own admission. Kanin (ironically, a pioneering researcher on sexual assault in dating situations) has been widely criticized for using data from a police department that subjected rape complainants to lie detector tests, which many believe are likely to mislabel anxious or agitated victims as liars and pressure them to recant. He found a similar pattern, however, in police records from two state universities where lie detectors were not used and all victims were interviewed by female officers.

While Kanin has cautioned against generalizing from his research, his conclusion that “false rape accusations are not uncommon” is supported by other evidence. Some years ago, a *Washington Post* investigation in Virginia and Maryland found that nearly one in four rape reports in 1990-91 were rejected as unfounded, and many of the women in those cases admitted they had lied when the newspaper contacted them. In several surveys of prosecutors and law enforcement officials, estimates of the share of rape complaints that turn out to be false have ranged from one in eight to one in five.

Yet the “women don’t lie” dogma is entrenched in popular culture. False accusations of rape are virtually nonexistent in films or in television crime shows, and male victims of rape hoaxes such as the three Duke University students accused of raping stripper Crystal Gail Mangum in 2006 are unlikely to be featured in sympathetic TV movies of the week. To some extent, this dogma has also gained a strong foothold in the legal system. When Congress passed the 1994 Violence Against Women Act expanding federal protections for rape complainants, congressional reports justifying

the legislation cited statistics on the low rate of convictions in rape cases—based on the assumption that every rape report was true and every man accused was guilty.

The old biases against victims have given way to new ones that often stack the deck against the accused: Under rape shield laws, it is often difficult to introduce even relevant information that challenges the credibility of the accuser, including a history of making dubious or outright false accusations.

In a much-publicized 1998 case in New York, Columbia University graduate student Oliver Jovanovic was

No one knows how many men spend time in prison after being falsely accused of rape and either convicted or held without bail. In 1985, a Maryland woman named Kathryn Tucci was sentenced to a \$150 fine and 1,000 hours of community service for a false rape charge that put her former boyfriend, Mark Bowles, behind bars for over a year on a charge that she later told the *Washington Post* stemmed from unrelated “traumatic events.” In 1996, Los Angeles police officer Harris Scott Mintz spent five months in jail after being accused of rape by two different women: first a resident of



From left, Duke lacrosse players Dave Evans, Collin Finnerty, and Reade Seligmann as rape charges against them are dropped, April 2007

found guilty of assaulting and sexually abusing Barnard College student Jamie Rzucek in an encounter that he claimed involved consensual bondage. Email messages from Rzucek to Jovanovic in which she professed interest in sadomasochism and discussed engaging in such activities with another man were ruled inadmissible by the trial judge. The conviction was eventually overturned on appeal on the grounds that Jovanovic was not allowed to present an adequate defense—but not until he had spent 20 months in prison and suffered an assault from another inmate. (Rzucek was denounced as a habitual liar by some members of her own family.) Feminists deplored the reversal of the case as a blow to victims.

the neighborhood he patrolled, then his own wife. Eventually, Mrs. Mintz admitted that she’d made up the story because she was angry at her husband over the first charge. Then the original case fell apart after Mintz’s attorneys discovered that the woman had told an ex-roommate she had concocted the charge to sue the county and that she had tried a similar hoax before.

Even without prolonged imprisonment, an accusation and arrest can be costly. Just ask the three Duke students—Collin Finnerty, Reade Seligmann, and David Evans—who had to leave school and were vilified in the national media because of Mangum’s rape hoax.

The Duke saga made it abundantly clear that feminist orthodoxy on rape

is radically hostile to basic principles of justice. Former sex crimes prosecutor and law professor Wendy Murphy, who emerged as a leading TV commentator on the case with frequent appearances on CNN, Fox News, and other channels, repeatedly referred to the accused men as “rapists” on the air. On one occasion, she fumed: “I’m really tired of people suggesting that you’re somehow un-American if you don’t respect the presumption of innocence, because you know what that sounds like to a victim? Presumption you’re a liar.”

Strauss-Kahn’s accuser, who reportedly bragged in a recorded conversation with a jailed drug dealer about the money she hoped to reap from the case, may well be the victim of a sexual assault. But Strauss-Kahn, however unappealing his behavior in even the most favorable version of the events, may also be the victim of a devastating hoax who no more “deserved it” than a promiscuous woman deserves to be raped. And, just as Strauss-Kahn’s high status does not mean he is innocent, the woman’s underprivileged status as a Guinean immigrant does not mean she is telling the truth. Nor does her “credible,” distraught demeanor reported by the police constitute proof: In virtually every known rape hoax, the false accuser was described at some point as “very credible.”

In 2004, discussing another highly publicized sexual assault case involving basketball star Kobe Bryant, Murphy decried misogynistic myths about rape accusers—“that women are mentally ill and vindictive.” But the fact is that some women do make false claims of rape, for these and other reasons, just as some men commit rape because they are mentally ill or violent sociopaths.

In 1977, when feminists were waging a nationwide battle for legal reforms to improve the treatment of rape victims, Columbia University law professor Vivian Berger—generally a supporter of these reforms—cautioned against “sacrificing legitimate rights of the accused person on the altar of Women’s Liberation.” Today, that warning remains as relevant as ever. ♦

Walker’s Vindication

The controversial Wisconsin budget reform saves teachers’ jobs. **BY JOHN MCCORMACK**

Emily Koczela had been anxiously waiting for months for Wisconsin governor Scott Walker’s controversial budget repair bill to take effect. Koczela, the finance director for the Brown Deer school district, had been negotiating with the local union, trying to get it to accept concessions in order to make up for a \$1 million budget shortfall. But the union wouldn’t budge.

“We laid off 27 [teachers] as a precautionary measure,” Koczela told me. “They were crying. Some of these people are my friends.”

On June 29 at 12:01 A.M., Koczela could finally breathe a sigh of relief. The budget repair bill—delayed for months by protests, runaway state senators, and a legal challenge that made its way to the state’s supreme court—was law. The 27 teachers on the chopping block were spared.

With “collective bargaining rights” limited to wages, Koczela was able to change the teachers’ benefits package to fill the budget gap. Requiring teachers to contribute 5.8 percent of their salary toward pensions saved \$600,000. Changes to their health care plan—such as a \$10 office visit co-pay (up from nothing)—saved \$200,000. Upping the workload from five classes, a study hall, and two prep periods to six classes and two prep periods saved another \$200,000. The budget was balanced.

“Everything we changed didn’t touch the children,” Koczela said. Under a collective bargaining agreement, she continued, “We could never have negotiated that—never ever.” Koczela, a graduate of Smith College and Duke University Law School, is no Republican flack. She says she’s

a “classic Wisconsin independent. I vote both parties. I voted for Senator [Russ] Feingold but I voted for [Republican state] Senator Alberta Darling too.”

In Brown Deer and school districts across the state, Walker’s budget repair bill, known as Act 10, is working just as he promised. To make up for a \$2.8 billion deficit without raising taxes, state aid to school districts (the largest budget line) was reduced by \$830 million. Act 10, Walker said, would give districts “the tools” needed to make up for the lost money as fairly as possible.

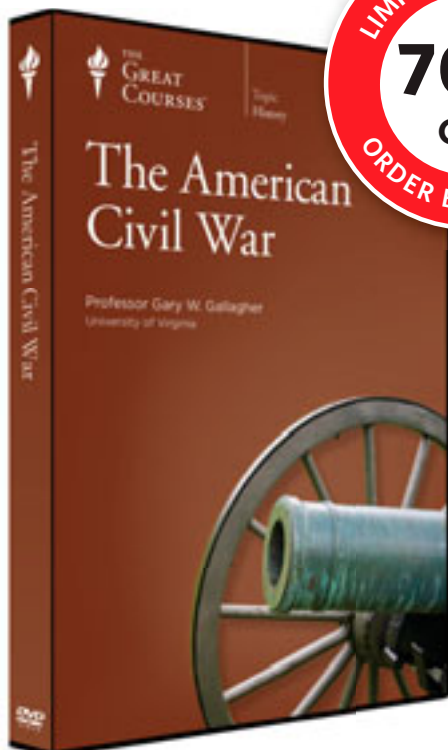
But union leaders argued that the fight over the budget repair bill had nothing to do with balancing budgets. It was all about stripping public employees of their “collective bargaining rights.”

“We have said all along that this isn’t about pay and benefits,” Mary Bell, president of the state’s teachers’ union, said in February. “We are prepared to implement the financial concessions proposed to help our state in these tough times. But . . . we will not be denied our right to collectively bargain.”

Acceding, at least rhetorically, to higher benefit contributions—5.8 percent of salary for pension (up from nothing) and 12.6 percent of health care premiums—looked like a smart tactic. It made teachers seem reasonable and focused the fight on collective bargaining “rights.”

What few people may have understood, though, is that these are “rights” that most people, including federal employees, don’t have. But Americans don’t like taking away anybody’s rights. The polls in Wisconsin showed voters overwhelmingly opposed to “weakening” or “stripping” or “eliminating” collective

John McCormack is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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bargaining rights. President Obama called the bill an “assault on unions.” Democratic state senator Lena Taylor compared Scott Walker to Hitler.

But as the abstract debate over collective bargaining collides with reality, it is becoming clear just how big a lie the Big Labor line was. Now that the law is in effect, where are the horror stories of massive layoffs and schools shutting down? They don’t exist—except in a couple of districts where collective bargaining agreements, inked before the budget repair bill was introduced, remain in effect.

In Milwaukee, nine schools are shutting and 354 teachers have been fired due to a drop in state funding and the end of federal stimulus funding. But if teachers there agreed to the 5.8 percent pension contribution, the school district says it would rehire 200 of those teachers. (Other changes could offset the rest of the layoffs.)

Despite the promise from Mary Bell that all teachers would contribute something toward their pensions,

Milwaukee teachers’ union president Bob Peterson won’t agree to the change. In doing so he’s made it clear that “collective bargaining rights” is code for “union veto power.”

“You have a choice: layoffs or pension contributions. Do you see that choice?” a local Fox News reporter asked Peterson. “Why did you make a choice of layoffs?”

“I didn’t lay off anybody,” Peterson replied. He thinks Milwaukee teachers have conceded enough and blames Walker’s budget cuts for the layoffs. But a year ago—before Walker was elected and when Democrats controlled all branches of government—there were also layoffs.

Given the choice between fewer benefits and layoffs, the Milwaukee teachers’ union chose the latter. In 2010, 482 teachers, including Megan Sampson, a young educator named an “outstanding first year teacher” by the Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, got the axe. CNN reports that this year “Milwaukee teachers

are offering meals and moral support to 354 fellow educators who will be laid off.” Meals and moral support? The union’s got your back. A job? Not so much.

The only other district seeing such massive layoffs is Kenosha, where 212 teachers will be fired this year. “Kenosha is in the same boat as [Milwaukee], with a collective bargaining agreement signed before Walker took office that lasts until June 30, 2013,” the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported on July 16. “But most other Wisconsin districts have avoided layoffs and massive cuts to programs.”

One striking feature of Walker’s budget repair bill is the flexibility it has given school districts to balance their budgets. For example, things are looking up in the tiny town of Pittsville in the heart of the state, where the district balanced its budget mostly through increased pension contributions and not replacing four retiring teachers.

“We didn’t change anything in our

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health care at all,” Superintendent Terry Reynolds told me. “If Act 10 hadn’t passed,” he said, “I don’t think the teachers’ union would have wanted to approve the 5.8 percent contribution” to pensions. “That would have been a hard battle to fight. I’m not sure we would have saved dollars there.” Enough money was freed up that Pittsville property taxes will decrease by 9 percent next year.

While class sizes increased slightly in Pittsville, they’re going down in the Kaukauna school district, where the school board used the budget repair bill to turn a \$400,000 deficit into a \$1.5 million surplus. In addition to the 5.8 percent pension contribution, the board pared back personal days from ten to five, increased the deductible for a family health insurance plan from \$250 to \$500, and required middle school and high school teachers to teach six classes instead of five. Any or all of these changes could have been vetoed by the union under a collective bargaining agreement.

The reforms will allow Kaukauna to spend \$300,000 in merit pay for teachers next year and offer more Advanced Placement classes and languages like Chinese or Arabic in the future, according to board president Todd Arnoldussen. Bringing down class sizes “was a win for the kids and a win for everybody,” he told me.

But as Patrick Meyer, the head union negotiator in Kaukauna, says in a video, “morale has been terrible” in the district. Might teachers be spread too thin now? “Elementary teachers already teach seven hours a day,” says Arnoldussen. “That’s a horrible argument. I mean, come on. Six classes at 50 minutes.”

If morale is down, interest in teaching at Kaukauna isn’t. An opening for an elementary teacher attracted “over 500 applicants,” says Arnoldussen. “So you obviously have a huge amount of people that really want to work for Kaukauna . . . under our noncollective bargaining agreement.”

Just three weeks after Walker’s

budget went into effect, its sweeping success is already apparent. But will it be enough to spare the six Republican state senators who face recall elections on August 9? Whether or not the Democrats gain the three seats they need to take over the senate, Walker’s collective bargaining success won’t be undone anytime soon. But a victory could embolden Democrats, who are gearing up for a recall election against Walker as early as the spring of 2012.

“I don’t think they think the sky’s going to fall,” says Emily Koczela of Brown Deer residents, who will vote in the recall election of Republican state senator Alberta Darling.

As for the teachers, “some of them will feel better in a year or two.” Koczela says the union told them that “this is all a sham. There isn’t really a budget shortfall. If we just all stop giving tax breaks to wealthy corporations you’ll all be fine.”

“They didn’t know who was lying to them.” But soon enough they will. ♦

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The Euro Endgame

At last, the voters

BY ANDREW STUTTAFFORD

Billion by billion by billion, showdown by argument by ultimatum, Greece's latest bailout is being put together by those who run the eurozone. The country's finances are so bad, and its prospects so poor, that even the new \$159 billion rescue package announced on Thursday will (assuming it comes into effect) probably only prove to be a reprieve.

Never mind. Buying time is the name of the game. If Greece can be kept going, and Portugal and Ireland too, financial markets might, fingers crossed, calm down, and the threat that panic might engulf Spain and Italy—two economies too big to bail—and the banks that have lent to them might recede. Then, come July 2013, the \$1.1 trillion European Stability Mechanism will spring to life. It will be backed by the 17 members of the eurozone, be policed by Brussels, and it will inherit the proto-IMF powers now being proposed for the European Financial Stability Facility that it will succeed. Well, that is the plan (at the time of writing), complete with a hint of Ponzi, a dash of Micawber, and dire warnings of what the alternative might be.

There's a lot that needs not to go wrong, but of all the elements that could, the most dangerous may come from a source that Brussels has long tried to write out of the plot: the ballot box. There's an irony to that. If there was anything (other than misplaced Carolingian nostalgia) at the heart of the project for a European union it was the idea that, after the wars of the first half of the twentieth

century, the peoples of the old world could no longer be trusted with their own sovereignty. It's never been much of an argument, but it's worked well enough for the EU's emerging technocratic elite.

The establishment of the euro is thus best understood as just another



This really will be the last time, I promise

stage in the progressive disenfranchisement of Europe's voters. The replacement of domestic currencies with what was, in effect, foreign money meant that, as a practical matter, the countries (and particularly the weaker countries) of the eurozone lost much of what was left of their fiscal and economic autonomy. Previously a nation with subpar finances and/or an uncompetitive cost base could allow the depreciation of its lira, its drachma, or its escudo to restore some balance. Its standard of living might fall relative to its international competitors', but it could usually muddle along in the fashion that its people had, one way or another, chosen.

Now that option was closed. Forget the voters; once a country could

no longer print its own money it had to run itself in ways that ensured it could keep international creditors—which is to say all creditors—happy. More generally, it had to manage itself in a manner that allowed it to keep reasonably close to the pacesetters of the monetary union in which it now dwelt—and if that country was Greece and the pacesetter was Germany, that was only going to be possible (if at all) with wrenching political and cultural change. That change might have been desirable, but to think that external discipline alone would be enough to set it in motion was a fatal conceit.

After 10 years in the currency union, Greece needs to devalue its currency by perhaps 50 percent. With no drachma to debauch, the only alternative is drastic austerity, and that is where politics may spoil the unlovely technocratic party that is now being thrown for the Hellenic Republic. In early July, Jean-Claude Juncker, the Luxembourgish who presides over the organizing committee of the eurozone's finance ministers, announced that Greece's "economic sovereignty" would be "massively limited." But what if the Greeks say no? So far, their parliament has voted through what it has to, but the opposition is not on board, and the economy is being pulled down ever further by debts that cannot be repaid and a currency that Greece cannot afford. With unemployment at an official 16 percent (or 43 percent of those under 24) and further street disturbances a certainty, how long will it be before Greece decides that it has less to lose than its creditors from the "selective" default it is now to be permitted? The crisis has already brought down the Irish and Portuguese governments and contributed to the humiliation of Spain's ruling Socialists in recent local elections. For all the Brussels chatter of additional "structural funds" to be deployed in the "relaunch" of the Greek economy, how much do Greece's politicians really have to lose by calling Juncker's bluff?

Faced with a future that offers, at best, a bleak and humiliating road ahead, their counterparts in other PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece,

JACQUES GRIESSMAYER

Andrew Stuttaford works in the international financial markets and writes frequently about cultural and political issues.

and Spain) may come to feel the same. Thus the Irish are reexamining the wisdom of guaranteeing the liabilities of their broken banking system to the extent that they have—a promise that, at this stage, may be worth more to foreign creditors than anyone at home.

Those who have found themselves feeding PIIGS are unhappy too, nowhere more so than in Germany, the country that is effectively underwriting the euro, a currency that—true to Brussels form—its electorate was never truly asked to endorse. As for the risks, they were barely discussed with voters, and when they were discussed, they were denied. German taxpayers would not be on the hook for anyone else, oh no. But that's not how it has turned out for them, and they are not well pleased.

This has put German chancellor Angela Merkel in a spot. Without German support for the eurozone's crumbling periphery, decidedly unselective defaults will trigger the financial contagion that policymakers are trying to avoid. For all her disapproval of PIIGS

sty failings, the pragmatic Merkel understands this perfectly well, but her power to force through another round of assistance is not what it was. She still commands a comfortable majority in the Bundestag, but, in part thanks to the controversy over German participation in earlier bailouts, she has lost her grip over her country's upper house. There may be worse to come. Polls taken before the announcement of the latest rescue plan showed that over 60 percent of Germans opposed extending further money to Greece, and this discontent is penetrating her governing coalition.

And opposition to bailouts has been mounting amongst voters elsewhere in the eurozone's richer north for quite some time. That's ominous. The new Greek package, and the changes to the European Financial Stability Facility that accompany it, require the approval of every member of the coalition of the unwilling that is meant to be providing the funds. Earlier bailouts have already riled voters in Austria, divided

the ruling Dutch coalition, and helped propel the True Finns, a once-small populist party, to third place in April's Finnish general election with 19 percent of the vote. Under the circumstances the notion that the Greek rescue plan will sail smoothly through all the national parliaments involved looks like fantasy.

The politics will be rough, and they will get rougher. Neither this bailout, nor the expanded European Financial Stability Facility, nor its successor, will be enough to unwind the imbalances now ravaging the eurozone's periphery. The best chance of achieving that will be to move on to a quasi-federal budgetary, fiscal, and "transfer" union. That will be a hard sell to electorates in those countries that will be footing the bill (probably in excess of an annual \$150 billion), and after the fiascos of the last year or so it will be politically too dangerous to try, once again, to bypass them.

Voters may well start to count after all. ♦

Financial Reform Law Hobbling Recovery

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Before the most expansive overhaul of our financial regulatory system in decades became law, one of its chief authors, Sen. Chris Dodd, said, "No one will know until this is actually in place how it works." One year later, the real impact of the Dodd-Frank Act largely remains a mystery.

It's a mystery because many of the rules required by the law have yet to be written. Indeed, there are so many new mandated regulations that the bureaucrats can't keep up. Two things we know for certain: The massive law will layer more bureaucracy on top of old regulations, and this "twilight zone" period of uncertainty will restrict capital and hobble the recovery.

Although Dodd-Frank will impact everything from derivatives to capital requirements, one of its most frightening and destabilizing features is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB),

a new agency that has been granted unprecedented power to regulate consumer financial products and services.

Now, there's nothing wrong with giving consumers greater protection, but overzealous or badly implemented regulations will end up hurting the very consumers the rules were designed to help. Unfortunately, the CFPB's lack of checks and balances and inability to answer basic questions about its plans have businesses bracing for the worst.

The bureau's structure is dangerously unlike any other federal agency. It has total authority to define its jurisdiction and set its budget without oversight from Congress. All of its power is concentrated in a single director. Other agencies, like the Securities and Exchange Commission, are led by bipartisan, multimember commissions, ensuring political and policy balance. There is no such accountability at the CFPB.

The CFPB has been largely silent on critical questions about its operations. Will the bureau prevent Main Street businesses from offering their customers financing?

How will it protect small business access to credit, and how it will use its broad and vague mandate to prevent "unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices?"

The almost certain result of this powerful and unaccountable agency is fewer and more expensive credit options for consumers and small businesses. Restrict capital further and make it more expensive and we'll have an even harder time getting our economy out of the ditch.

Congress needs to reform the CFPB to make it more accountable and demand answers to these basic questions through the confirmation process. Ultimately, what's clear about Dodd-Frank one year later is that the law's hastily erected bureaucracy has greatly expanded the role of government and is creating uncertainty, posing a serious threat to our economic recovery.



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New York Times Passes Gas

Calls it ‘news.’

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

By now just about everyone has jumped on board the natural gas bandwagon (see “The Gas Revolution,” April 18, 2011). Its newfound abundance inside the four corners of the United States is proving to be a disruptive factor in the nation’s energy mix. Cheap natural gas adds to the pressure on coal-fired electricity, but also makes wind and solar power much less feasible, even with massive subsidies. Natural gas-powered cars and trucks might offer a way of significantly lowering our oil imports, while at the same time the technology that has unlocked new gas supplies is starting to deliver a substantial increase in domestic oil production, reversing a 30-year slide. Cheap, abundant, domestically produced energy? Naturally all the usual suspects are unhappy about this.

No one seems more unhappy than the *New York Times*, which was late to recognize the unfolding natural gas story, even though much of it was happening in its own back yard. So late last June the *Times* published a multipart series by their gas beat reporter, Ian Urbina, suggesting that prospects for the “gas revolution” are not merely hyped, but constitute the next bubble certain to burst. There’s even an insinuation of possible fraud on the part of the gas industry, of natural gas as a “Ponzi scheme.” And just to make sure none of its readers missed the point, the *Times* even deployed the

Steven F. Hayward is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and author of the Almanac of Environmental Trends.

“E-word” in the headline: “‘Enron Moment’: Insiders Sound an Alarm Amid a Natural Gas Rush.” The two stories are more evidence of the *Times*’s long slide into agenda-driven journalism that excuses shoddy practices, dubious sourcing, and appalling economic ignorance.



Compressed natural gas: fuel of the future?

The main claims of the stories are that gas reserves are being overestimated by both industry and the government, that wells are depleting faster than claimed, and that many gas extraction companies are losing money and will eventually face financial collapse. But the *Times* offers no compelling data or analysis to support these contentions. Instead, it relies entirely on the sensational view of two would-be whistleblowing “insiders,” along with leaked emails and documents. The *Times* fails

to disclose that the two principal “whistleblowers,” Deborah Rogers and Art Berman, are strong skeptics of natural gas, and that the idea of a “gas bubble” is cover (in Rogers’s case, at least) for opposition to the “fracking” technology that is being used to produce the new gas fields.

Rogers is identified by the *Times* as a member of the advisory committee of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas; undisclosed is her affiliation with the Oil and Gas Accountability Project, an environmental group opposed to fracking. The *Times* similarly describes Art Berman as a “geologist who worked two decades at Amoco and has been one of the most vocal skeptics of shale gas economics,” but omits his alignment with the controversial “peak oil” community whose ideological dislike of fossil fuels drives its conclusions. Unlike Rogers, Berman has considerable expertise in the area but has been a controversial figure in the oil and gas industry for some time. It is evident that Urbina simply put his byline at the disposal of Rogers and Berman’s anti-gas agenda.

The use of company emails and documents from the Energy Information Administration was even more dubious. These were provided to the *Times* mostly by Rogers and Berman. Urbina never contacted the authors of some of the emails cited in the story, and contacted others in a perfunctory way. He misidentified one source, never disclosed that some emails were several years old, and did not report the context of several quoted emails, which were written in reaction to hearing one of Berman’s skeptical presentations. In other words, not exactly a lot of heavy lifting on the reporter’s part.

But the most glaring defect of the series was its stupefying economic ignorance and disregard for any data analysis. Urbina quotes statements skeptical of several Texas gas fields, without noting that production continues to increase in all of those fields. He didn’t note the connection, taught

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

in Econ 101, between recent declines in gas rig activity in Texas and the fact that gas prices have *fallen* by two-thirds. Urbina unwittingly has part of the story right, but for the wrong reasons: Some gas exploration companies are facing financial distress only because the industry has been *too successful* in exploiting new gas supplies.

Urbina could be on to something when he says that the current natural gas price of slightly over \$4 per thousand cubic feet is too low to support the financial structure of many players in the industry, but that's not the story he explored. Nor did he report on how different geological conditions from region to region present different extraction costs. These are not signs of a fraudulent bubble, but signs of a fast-moving market responding to price signals. (While everyone is talking about gas drilling, almost unnoticed by the *Times* and other major media is that the Baker-Hughes rig count now shows there are more oil drilling rigs in the field in the United States than gas drilling rigs. As recently as six years ago gas drilling rigs outnumbered oil drilling rigs by four to one. This is occurring precisely because the price of gas has fallen while the price of oil has risen, and this is why the next "surprise" to hit the *New York Times*, within a couple of years, will be sharply rising domestic oil production.)

It is touching that the *Times* would profess such concern for investors and warn them of another catastrophic bubble like housing and the Internet. But the story prompted a predictable response in Washington: Democrats opposed to fossil fuels, such as the irrepressible Rep. Edward Markey, called for hearings and investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission, no doubt to buttress the anti-fossil fuel agenda.

But if the *Times* and anti-fossil fuel groups thought the series would provide a boost to that agenda, it was drowned out by the widespread denunciation that came not just from the gas industry or individual companies singled out in the stories, but from many neutral experts. Michael

Levi of the Council on Foreign Relations, who is no shill for anyone's energy agenda, wrote scornfully of the *Times*'s "war on shale" that it had produced stories of "pretty poor quality" raising a "red flag." Levi observed, "There's a pattern: Urbina was clearly looking for negative views of shale gas, and had no problem finding them. Given the massive size of the industry, and the number of financial bets being placed upon the sector, that shouldn't be a surprise. What is a surprise is that Urbina hasn't done much to put them in context." MIT's well-regarded natural gas study group also issued a critical statement.

The most embarrassing spanking, however, came from the *Times*'s ombudsman, Arthur Brisbane, who filed a long report in the paper's July 17 edition calling the story "a journalistic gamble," and concluding that "the article went out on a limb, lacked

an in-depth dissenting view in the text and should have made clear that shale gas had boomed." The *Times* national editors who oversaw Urbina's story, Rick Berke and Adam Bryant, are standing pat, pushing back against Brisbane with an argument that boils down to "we did *too* work hard!"

The essential bias of the *Times*'s energy reporting can be grasped with a simple query about "balance." If the *Times* were to work half as hard investigating the financial weakness and intrinsic market conditions of "renewable" energy such as wind, solar, and biofuels, they could run a monthlong series on a real bubble with shocking and often scandalous details. But if they did so, would the erstwhile liberal guardians of consumers and the marketplace call for hearings and SEC investigations? That question is so easy even a *Times* editor could get it right. ♦

Gold Standard or Bust

Fixing the dollar before it's too late

BY JUDY SHELTON

As the truth-or-dare battle over raising the debt ceiling moves toward a resolution of some sort, we are witnessing a unique political moment, with attention finally riveted on our nation's fiscal future. We are about to learn whether there is such a thing as fiscal responsibility in a democracy where 45 percent of households don't pay income taxes. Or whether any sense of moral obligation still attaches to paying your own way as a citizen. Chronic budget

deficits are evidence of endemic political cowardice when it comes to reconciling government revenues with government expenditures. And our elected officials keep choosing the coward's way: They "fund" excessive spending through borrowing.

Government borrowing is a convenient ploy for putting off financial inevitability for another generation—except for one huge problem. You can't have sound money if you don't have sound finances. If we fail to get a handle on government expenses under our current dire circumstances, the dollar is doomed.

Now some folks around the world might be happy enough about that. The dollar has been at the core of

Judy Shelton, author of Money Meltdown: Restoring Order to the Global Currency System, is a senior fellow at the Atlas Economic Research Foundation and codirector of the Sound Money Project.

global finance since the end of World War II, as the preferred global currency for trade and capital transactions. One major benefit: It has enabled America to more easily borrow. Debt obligations issued by the U.S. government offer built-in appeal as the repository for dollars accumulated by foreigners. If you are China, say, and you sell much more to Americans than they buy from you, where better to stow that future purchasing power than in risk-free Treasury bonds issued by the United States? The dollar's prominent role in global financial affairs makes it the most vital nonmilitary instrument of American power; it figures in 85 percent of foreign-exchange transactions, and dollar assets account for roughly two-thirds of the reserve assets of industrialized and developing countries. Of course, not everyone appreciates all those perks going to the United States—even when they realize that a diminishing dollar hurts the value of their own portfolios.

Still, this much is true for those who hold dollars, both U.S. citizens and central bankers around the world. Whether it's the cash distributed to community banks by the Federal Reserve or the trillions in Treasury obligations peddled at home and abroad—it's all U.S. government IOUs. Everyone who holds dollars is hurt when the U.S. government debases its currency.

People take dollars in the expectation they will be able to use them in the future to obtain something of comparable worth. They place their faith not so much in the "credit of the U.S. government" as in the eventual capacity of America's economy to yield productive output. As government-issued claims against our country's future output accumulate, there is a hollowing-out effect, with financial capital drawn away from the real economy. Real economic growth happens when private investors take their chances on innovative entrepreneurs—not when they are induced to purchase "safe" government securities.

Since the resources needed to pay for current government expenditures are not available, the government is

laying claim to future revenues. The notion of money as a claim on tangible assets is thus rendered abstract. Defining the value of money becomes a matter of government dictate. That's why it's called *fiat* money, from the Latin for "Let it be done."

Fear of losing the dollar as a meaningful unit of account has lately forged a curious confluence of interest among

unlikely parties. There are those, mostly U.S. citizens, who use the dollar because it is America's official legal tender; among these people, we hear increased protests against the Federal Reserve's abuse of its powers to debase the currency. Then there are those who rely on the dollar as the world's reserve currency; within this conglomeration of global players there

Exploring



Natural gas jobs have increased 20% since 2006

Most Americans know oil and natural gas heat our homes and get us where we need to go. What many may not know is just how vital they are to quality American jobs.

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*The Economic Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the U.S. Economy, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, September 2009 (Sponsored by API)

**The Contributions of the Natural Gas Industry to the U.S. National and State Economies, IHS Global Insight, September 2009

are decidedly mixed feelings about the continued monetary hegemony of the United States.

This makes for an unexpected coalition for monetary reform. The decline of the dollar is linking the economic anxieties of Americans—on Main Street and Wall Street—with profound concern elsewhere in the world over whether America will continue to

exercise global leadership. And while these seemingly disparate factions may not readily perceive it, within their mutual monetary angst may also be discovered a shared agenda for saving the dollar.

The connection was made last November when former Alaska governor Sarah Palin called for a stable dollar to put our economy back on the

right track. “The Fed’s pump priming addiction has got our small businesses running scared,” she noted, “and our allies worried.” Robert Zoellick, who heads the World Bank, lamented in a *Financial Times* op-ed that global consternation over the Fed’s quantitative easing was prompting talk of currency wars. Zoellick proposed that the global monetary regime be reformed to spur economic growth—and suggested that any new system should “consider employing gold as an international reference point.”

Though it’s odd to think that the objectives of the Tea Party conservatives for whom Palin speaks might coincide with the concerns of the global elite who read the *Financial Times*, there is a thread that unites them. It’s the realization that the world economy cannot take another devastating boom-and-bust cycle.

What gold brings to the monetary table is discipline. If individuals suspect that money is being issued in excess of levels warranted by legitimate economic needs and growth prospects, they can exchange their currency holdings for gold at a pre-established, fixed rate. Gold convertibility ensures that the money supply expands or contracts based on the collective assessment of market participants—as opposed to the less-than-omniscient hunches of central bankers. Gold provides a self-correcting mechanism for irrational exuberance; as credit begins to flow too freely, as equity values or commodity prices appear frothy, the astute observer at the margin cashes out in gold. Monetary central planning gives way to the aggregate wisdom of the free market.

A gold standard brakes runaway government spending. It allows individuals to defeat governments that dilute the value of money. A gold standard provides citizens with “a form of protection against spendthrift governments,” as the economist Ludwig von Mises put it. “If, under the gold standard, a government is asked to spend money for something new, the minister of finance can say: ‘And where do I get the money? Tell me, first, how I will find the money for this additional expenditure.’”

A photograph of three people, two men and one woman, smiling in what appears to be a laboratory or industrial setting. The woman in the foreground is wearing a blue lab coat. The man on the left is wearing a red shirt, and the man on the right is wearing a light blue shirt and has safety glasses on his head.

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Under a gold standard, money regains its primary purpose as a vital tool of free markets instead of serving as a corrupted instrument of government policy. Genuine economic growth—as opposed to the money illusion of artificial wealth reflected in bloated equities or housing prices—is no longer sacrificed to monetary policy encumbered by the fiscal failures of government.

We have learned from the European Union's experience with the euro this past decade that major benefits can be derived from eliminating price distortions caused by fluctuating currencies; unfortunately, the lack of fiscal discipline among participating eurozone nations now threatens the entire system. As with the dollar, the ability of eurozone governments to borrow money to cover nonproductive deficit spending—and then convert government-issued debt obligations into a component of the monetary base—undermines the credibility of the currency. Robert Mundell, the Nobel laureate in economics who laid the theoretical groundwork for the euro, suggested recently that the world could move forward to a better monetary system by tying the U.S. dollar and the euro to each other and also to gold. “Gold is nobody’s liability and it can’t be printed,” Mundell told *Bloomberg*. “So it has a strength and confidence that people trust.”

Mundell was the intellectual godfather of supply-side economics, usually remembered as advocacy of low taxes but equally a movement that favored hard money. He also mentored Jack Kemp, the pro-growth Republican congressman and vice-presidential candidate who championed the cause of making the dollar “as good as gold.” Kemp made the case for restoring sound money an integral part of his policy agenda; even as he extolled the benefits of international exchange-rate stability as the logical underpinning for free trade, he was able to bring home its relevance for the American public. “Let’s not forget that what is

true of nations is also true of individual workers, savers, investors, businesses, and families.”

Kemp’s initiative to establish a new international gold standard was financially sophisticated—far more so than Nixon’s blunt decision in 1971 to renege on America’s historic commitment to redeem dollars for gold. Yet Kemp also insisted that “honest, sound, stable money is a popular, blue-collar, bread-and-butter, winning political issue.” The 1984 Republican platform referred to gold as a “useful mechanism” for aligning Federal



So now that we've got some, should we short the euro?

Reserve monetary policy decisions with the goal of price stability. Citing the domestic need for “real economic growth without inflation” and the benefits of a stable dollar internationally (“commodity prices which change only when real production changes”), the plank combined political appeal with sound economic reasoning.

Could such a proposal find resonance with voters today? Americans are more cognizant now than in the 1980s of the inverse relationship between the spot price of gold and the perceived value of the dollar. Far from inclining toward naïve provincialism or embracing rigid dogma, the growing number of citizens who purchase gold—in physical form, or through exchange-traded funds—testifies to increasing savvy. Tired of falling for the ruse of putting dollars into savings accounts at near-zero rates of interest, many opt to purchase Treasury

Inflation-Protected Securities to avoid getting burned by dollar debasement.

Which raises the question: Why should we have to game the future value of our own currency? Why can’t we just have money that works?

Frustration over the arrogance—and ultimate price tag—of fiscal stimulus is now spilling over into its monetary counterpart. The passive role originally stipulated for the Fed has morphed into one of overwhelming dominance of the economy, even as the Fed’s fundamental mission of preserving the purchasing power of the dollar has been subordinated to papering over fiscal failure. The fact that legislation has been introduced in 13 states to allow gold and silver to function as legal tender indicates broad dissatisfaction with the Fed’s stewardship of the dollar.

Anyone who believes that the effort to reaffirm a gold link for the dollar is politically quixotic was not paying attention when Senator Jim DeMint questioned Fed chairman Ben Bernanke at a hearing earlier this year. Making reference to a 1981 proposal by Alan Greenspan, published in the *Wall Street Journal*, that the Treasury issue five-year notes payable in gold or dollars, at the option of the holder, DeMint asked: “Have you given any thought to the idea of issuing bonds payable in gold that would begin to create some standard for our currency?” Bernanke demurred, observing that a gold standard was no “panacea” yet also conceding that “it did deliver price stability over very long periods of time.”

One could say, of course, that a balanced budget is no panacea either—but it imposes needed discipline on fiscal decision-making. In the same way, monetary policy needs some discipline to prevent the dollar from being the default mechanism for enabling government mismanagement. Gold convertibility would signal that we intend to maintain the integrity of our currency. It’s all about trajectory and confidence; sound money makes it real. ♦

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Professor James Noggle received his M.Ed. from Ball State University. He has taught for more than 30 years at Pendleton Heights High School in Pendleton, Indiana.

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Rolling Back the Nanny State

One red-light camera at a time

By JONATHAN V. LAST

Last March the city council in San Bernardino voted 5-0 to kill their red-light camera system. Since the cameras were installed in 2005, the program had brought them little but grief. In 2008, the city was caught shortening the timing of yellow lights in order to gin up more citations. Later that year a California appellate court ruled that the city's contract with the red-light camera service American Traffic Solutions (ATS) was in violation of state law. And in 2010, a county court ruled that images from red-light cameras were inadmissible hearsay. The cameras were such a debacle for San Bernardino that in the end the city paid ATS \$110,000 to get out of a contract that would have kept the cameras in place until 2014.

It sounds like an extraordinary story: a city, in the middle of a recession, paying a vendor to cancel a contract that is supposed to produce revenue. But it turns out that San Bernardino isn't extraordinary at all. Across California and the rest of the country, cities and towns are dismantling their red-light camera regimes. And it's this larger story that's remarkable, because it shows that even at this late date, the people can, from time to time, still hold their governments to account.

Like many cultural plagues, the red-light camera originated in Europe. Invented by a Dutch race-car driver, Maurice Gatsonides, red-light cameras were installed by European municipalities throughout the 1980s to ticket drivers without the necessity of using actual police. In 1993 the sickness crossed the Atlantic, and New York City permanently installed cameras of its own.

The idea behind the red-light camera is simple:



Place the device in an intersection, and when a car passes through after the light has turned from amber to red, it snaps away—taking photos of the car's position, the driver's side window, and the license plate. In practice, the system is only slightly more complicated because the local police do not operate the cameras themselves. Instead, the city contracts with one of several big corporations (such as American Traffic Solutions, based in Arizona, or Redflex, an Australian firm) who do the work for them. The company installs, maintains, and monitors the cameras. When they catch someone running a red light, they electronically send the file to the local police department for a *pro forma* sign off, and then they mail out the ticket themselves. The company typically collects the fine and returns some share of the money to the municipality. It's a little like privateering.

And like privateering, red-light cameras are a pretty good business. American governments initially justified them under the rubric of public safety—the cameras were supposed to make intersections safer and protect, bless their little hearts, The Children. But the fig leaf of safety frittered away as study after study showed that the cameras made little difference and in some cases actually made intersections less safe. Drivers, knowing cameras were watching, tended to jam on their brakes suddenly at yellow lights, causing accidents. Further research showed that there *was* a way to make intersections safer: Simply lengthen the duration of amber lights, allowing drivers more time to make the critical decision to stop or go.

But there's no money in longer yellow lights. And it turned out that there was lots of it—piles and piles, really—in red-light cameras. In Washington, D.C., red-light cameras raised \$15.6 million in their first 30 months of operation. In one year—2009—Chicago made \$64 million from them. It's such big business that in 2001, Lockheed Martin

Jonathan V. Last is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

NEWS.COM

sold their red-light camera division to another company, Affiliated Computer Services, for \$800 million.

Which is why, throughout the '90s, red-light cameras sprouted across the American landscape. A company would come to town and pitch the local pols with the kind of deal that sold itself. "Just let us set up the cameras," they'd say, "and we'll give you a stream of never-ending revenue from a source that has no constituency. All you have to do is take credit for saving lives." Five hundred thirty-nine cities in 25 states signed up.

For a while, it looked as though the red menace might spread, slowly and irresistibly, to every intersection in America. After all, this is the mode of public life to which we've become accustomed: Officials, some elected, some not, decide to add little annoyances to our daily lives—more regulations for light bulbs, toilets, seatbelts, speed bumps—that prove irrevocable. Oh sure, on the big-ticket items—war, abortion, taxes, spending—elections have consequences. But when it comes to the little things, modern government has become a ratchet that only turns one way.

Yet the spectacle of government handing law enforcement duties to private companies with a monetary incentive to write as many citations as possible was a bridge too far. And city by city, the cameras have been pushed back.

Amazingly enough, in some cases the courts actually helped. In California they've made life difficult for the camera companies with decisions like the ones in San Bernardino. In Ohio a federal appeals court ruled that Cleveland's camera law was so poorly crafted that since it said car "owners" could be ticketed, people who lease their vehicles were exempt. The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that Minneapolis's entire red-light camera program was illegal and forced the city to refund the \$2.6 million it had collected.

In some cities, the government bureaucracy has pushed back, too. In Los Angeles last June, the Police Commission voted unanimously to drop its contract with ATS and get rid of cameras altogether. Despite the fact that L.A.'s red-light tickets are \$476 a pop, and that the program has written \$80 million worth of citations since 2004, the city has found a way to lose money on the deal. Once the camera company takes its fat cut, the residual dollars aren't enough to cover the costs of the seven police officers who

monitor the program and make the *pro forma* signoffs.

But the real muscle has come from voters. Petitions have put cameras on the ballot in local elections across the country, and whenever voters are given a choice on the matter, they say "no." In Houston, a pair of lawyers fought city hall to get a charter amendment (Proposition 3) on the ballot. The city's camera company, ATS, spent \$1.7 million in advertising during the race. The cameras lost. In Anaheim, an amendment banning cameras won 73 percent. In Sulphur, Louisiana, an anti-camera measure took 86 percent. From Maryland to Ohio to Arizona to Illinois, whenever voters get to pull the lever, the cameras get run out of town.

Which is why many towns (and the camera companies) have tried to keep the matter out of voters' hands. In

its 2010 annual report, Redflex noted that, while citizens have attempted to introduce ballot measures on cameras in many localities, the company was "actively implementing measures to defend against them" so as to "protect and improve our interests" in these "markets." That's not just bare-knuckled Redflex tactics, it's the industry standard. In Mukilteo, Washington, for instance, ATS asked a court to issue an emergency injunction preventing a proposed camera ban from appearing on the town's ballot. The court declined; the anti-camera measure won, 70 to 30.

Part of the reason people hate cameras is that the alliance of business and government tends to bring out the worst

in both. In 2009, Danny Park was driving through Santa Ana when a camera operated by Redflex tagged him for running a light. He fought the \$436 ticket on the grounds that the city had not provided a 30-day warning period for the camera, which California state law requires at every intersection where a camera is operational. Park took his case all the way to the appellate division of the Superior Court in Orange County. And he won. The decision was scheduled for publication when the city of Santa Ana took the extremely unusual step of petitioning the state Supreme Court to "depublish" the decision. Why? It wouldn't change the verdict in the *Park* case, but an unpublished decision would mean that other California drivers wouldn't be able to use the case as precedent. Instead, they'd have to re-create Park's entire argument from scratch—and likely work their way up the appeals chain, since the trial courts almost always find for the state



An anti-camera activist in Longview, Wash.

in such cases—if they wanted to fight illegally manufactured tickets. (The High Court denied the request.)

When they're not trying to game the legal system, the camera industry runs creepy Astroturf campaigns proclaiming its beneficence. Whenever cameras are in danger of going on ballots, a website appears. In Mukilteo it was KeepMukilteoSafe.com. The sites purport to be grassroots hubs for pro-camera voters, but they're prefab constructs without a whit of actual public support behind them. At least 18 of them appeared across the country recently, nearly identical in form and content. All of the sites were registered by a company called Advarion, which provides web services to ATS.

Already prone to suspect the worst about camera companies and local governments, a ring of anti-camera activist websites went to work ferreting out other bits of Astroturf. (They followed in the footsteps of anti-camera activist Richard Diamond's invaluable TheNewspaper.com.) They noticed that a particular line in favor of cameras kept appearing in the comments sections of stories about camera bans: "Seriously, you don't hear non-smokers complain about cigarette taxes so why should we believe these whiners are anything but reckless drivers who don't want to get caught?" The exact same wording and punctuation appears on dozens of websites, from the *Washington Post* to the Newark *Star-Ledger*. Other camera company fronts are slightly less bald-faced. The "National Coalition for Safer Roads," for instance, is a nonprofit dedicated to showing that red-light cameras save lives. It's actually staffed and run by a former Bush appointee. The organization is also, as the website demurely puts it, "supported by" ATS.

There's nothing new or shocking about an industry lobbying for itself, standing up fake grassroots support, and spending money to influence elections. But the fact that the camera companies behave like any other rent-seeking business tells you everything you need to know about them. Except that in this case, the rent they're seeking doesn't come from private-sector competitors. It comes from you.

And like other rent-seekers, the camera industry doesn't stoically accept the strictures of law and elections. It fights back. In 2009, voters in College Station, Texas, killed the town's camera program. A week later, an organization called "Keep College Station Safe" sued the city, claiming that the petition leading to the referendum was invalid. "Keep College Station Safe" is a political action committee with \$67,100 in total funding: \$30,000 from ATS, \$5,000 from

an ATS consultant, \$8,000 from a contractor who works for ATS, \$5,000 from an ATS subcontractor, and \$16,600 from a company that prints the tickets for ATS.

Voters in College Station then ran up against another obstacle: When "Keep College Station Safe" sued College Station, the city government—which was pro-camera—was eager to roll over and lose the case. It was only after citizen pressure forced the city to hire outside counsel that the lawsuit was defeated and the cameras came down.

Houston has the same problem. After voters approved a measure to get rid of cameras earlier this year, ATS filed suit on similar grounds. In the case of Proposition 3, they maintained that the city could only cancel the program via a "referendum," but that the vote was put on the ballot as a "charter amendment." In this case, ATS won. The judge told the city to turn the cameras back

on. And it wasn't at all clear that Houston's politicians were unhappy to lose in court—the mayor and her city attorney are both camera supporters who didn't even feign reluctance when they started the cameras running again. Only this time, they no longer pointed to safety as a reason for the cameras. Now the mayor said that she had to keep the cameras running because ATS was holding the city hostage. "Realizing that we have already laid off nearly 750 city employees through

a very difficult budget process," she said, "I can't in good conscience allow millions of dollars in exposure to ATS under this contract."

If anything, the case of Houston shows how remarkable it is that the public has made any progress at all against red-light cameras. Because the government is usually more foe than friend. For example, earlier this summer the California assembly took up a bill that would allow cities to reduce posted speeds in certain areas by 5 mph. The reason: cameras. In many intersections, a lower posted speed limit allows traffic lights to have shorter yellow-light intervals. And shorter amber times mean, well, yes, more accidents. But more camera citations, too.

Such are the minutiae of the menace cameras pose to the American system of governance: tenths-of-a-second on yellow-light times and the legal distinction between referendums and charter amendments.

None of it—not shorter yellows or the cameras or the \$400 tickets—represents a grand, existential threat to the Republic. But it's a threat all the same. A threat to the idea that government should be a tool of the people. Not a ratchet. ♦

The camera industry runs creepy Astroturf campaigns proclaiming its beneficence. Whenever cameras are in danger of going on ballots, the same website appears.

Let There Be Light, Sickly Blue Light

*Goodbye, incandescent bulb. Salvation comes
from the compact fluorescent lamp.*

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

In the beginning, there was a glade. A green and foresty place, a meadowy clearing in the great big woods. The robins called from branch to branch. A laughing stream wove gently through the dell. A rabbit hopped through the long grass, bright with morning dew. All was well, and all manner of things were well—until, one day, the evil came.

The evil, of course, is you. And me. People, in other words: human beings in general, but Europeans in particular—those pale pioneers who invaded the forest with their unnatural Western science and their denatured Western religion. Iron sick, they were, and gold mad. Acquisitive and unsettled. Uncomfortable in their own skins. They tormented the land with their steel axes and their guns, their machines and their desires. They poisoned Mother Earth with runoff and waste, overheated houses, and cars like angry monsters prowling through the night. What now can come to good, with people here? All is changed, and nothing for the better.

And yet, certain small actions might still save the world from the apocalypse we have brought upon ourselves—or, if they won't exactly save us, such gestures may nonetheless declare our *will* toward salvation, our right intention to

stand with the forces of light against the impending doom.

Like, for instance, hanging up my motel-room towel after a shower to signal the chambermaid that I don't need a fresh one.

Save The Planet! reads the headline on the motel placard that explains my duty. Saving the planet, one towel at a

time. A Gideon Bible may be safely stashed in the nightstand drawer, but sermons are still preached here in the formica bathrooms of the chain motel outside Carol Stream, Illinois. Carol Stream, Illinois, of all places: Cornfields and dry Midwestern plains stretch as far as the eye can see, but the placard's illustration shows an endangered bunny in a threatened forest glade, and the text is one of high moralism and utter confidence in a worldview.

No priest dare speak this way anymore. No pastor, no rabbi, deploys this tone. Your dentist might indulge it, in high dudgeon about flossing, or your internist on a tirade about smoking, but otherwise ethical discourse in our nation—the acceptable public language of manners and morals—is reduced to this kind of universal-

ized environmentalism: righteous notices posted in motel rooms in middle America about the ethics of terrycloth towels, preset air conditioning, and light bulbs.

Ah, yes. Light bulbs. You know, of course, about those twirled-tube bulbs of which motel chains now boast: CFLs, they're called, "compact fluorescent lamps," and they are about to become the primary means



Joseph Bottum is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD and the author of The Second Spring: Words into Music, Music into Words.

GARY LOCKE

of lighting our lives in the United States. Mr. Edison's old incandescent bulbs—the ubiquitous glass pears with the carbonized filament and the Sprengel pump-induced vacuum that have defined light since 1879—and all their tungsten descendants are under a death sentence: a rolling execution that begins with 100-watt bulbs on January 1 and moves down the wattage line in subsequent years.

A “dim bulb” you are, if you don’t grasp the need for this banning of incandescence. Or so, at least, the editorial page of the *Los Angeles Times* announced on July 18. Oh, the newspaper admitted, the public is showing some anger as it realizes, finally, that the 2007 light-bulb law is about to kick in, but, the *Times* assures us, science, economics, and “the nation’s future and collective health” all demand the change. Even “Edison himself, ever the forward thinker, probably would have approved.” Saving the planet, one gooseneck lamp at a time.

In point of fact, the science of the light-bulb ban is dubious, the economics are a shambles, and the impact on our “future and collective health” is entirely symbolic: more a genuflection toward environmentalism than an actual contribution. For that matter, it’s not clear that Edison—whose ever-forward thinking, one remembers, led him to invent the alternating-current electrical chair for executing prisoners—would have done more than looked up from his workbench to sneer.

You won’t get anywhere with the shining advocates of fluorescence, however, by pointing any of this out. The world finds its illumination where it will, and one interesting effect of a public moral vocabulary is that we find it difficult to make people hear anything that contradicts the truisms, platitudes, and shibboleths of the day. The inferiority of incandescent bulbs is written in the unanswerable nanny guidebook of the early 21st century, replacing the old Victorian entries on castor oil and such aphorisms as *Cleanliness is next to godliness*.

As it happens—if the lives of the hermit saints are any guide—cleanliness and godliness can often dwell some way apart. But that old nannyism really did capture something about British sensibility at a certain point in time. It expressed what we might call the *leak*—the place where our environmental religious energy, like water building up behind a dam, found a fissure and squirted out to douse the public square. Godliness is best, certainly, but cleanliness is very important, both for your health and proper deportment, and all good things fit together somehow, which means these good things must go together, and, anyway, we say so, and we’re good muscular Christians and members of the British middle class, so it must be true. Saving our souls, one bath at a time.

The Edwardians set the tone for all advanced twentieth-century opinion by roundly mocking such Victorian clichés,

and perhaps some of those nannyisms deserved it. But the mockery became meaningful—gained a public hearing—only when there had already faded away the public certainty and sensibility that had made the nannies’ proclamations seem meaningful. The truisms of one era are the curious totems and taboos of the next: We know them, but we don’t exactly remember why anyone bothered to think them.

Every broad religious movement leaves behind such remnants: small mementos of a no-longer-understood place where the faith of the moment found release as public morals. Why the great Methodist revival of John Wesley eventually issued in Victorian demands for bathing is not entirely clear, now. You probably had to have been there to understand. There’s a sense in which the First Great Awakening in America set up the Revolution, and the Second Great Awakening had as its moral consequence the abolition of slavery. But it’s something of a mystery why the Third Great Awakening left us with Gideon Bibles in hotel rooms and the memory of our strange national attempt at the prohibition of alcohol. The pressures and cracks of the time just let it flow out that way.

And now we have the light-bulb ban—the odd consequence of our current public religion, our present national ethics. For all this really is nanny-speak: the taking of the moral judgments that religious fervor has spewed into public life and the forming of them into platitudes. More than that, it’s nanny-speak made the law of the land, truisms with the force of congressional enactment. There’s an atheist group called the Abimelech Society whose members pride themselves on their supposedly daring feats of removing Gideon Bibles from hotel rooms and destroying them. The daring is not readily apparent; the day is long past when public outrage over anti-Christian atheism posed much threat. But think of it as a metaphor: Perhaps the time is coming, after our current environmental revival has ebbed, when would-be bravos will sneak compact fluorescent bulbs from hotel rooms—and replace them with clandestine incandescents.

I suppose, even knowing that it’s pointless these days, the facts of the great compact fluorescent lighting of America need to be laid out. According to the National Energy Foundation of the United Kingdom, the average life of a CFL is at least eight times longer than that of an incandescent, which looks like a great improvement in efficiency. Of course, hardly anyone is actually getting that much life from the bulbs; it turns out that a quarter of them lose power and dim after only 40 percent of their official lifespan. That lifespan was calculated from ideal use, and the truth is that we simply don’t use lights in the dream-world way of those calculations. If you turn your CFLs on and off too often, you cause their electronic ballasts to decay.

Dimmers kill them quickly, outside temperature ranges make them burn out, and they flicker themselves to death when coupled with motion sensors, light sensors, or timers.

But, for the sake of argument, grant the things an ideal use. The Department of Energy certainly did when, at Senate hearings this year, it announced that mandatory use of CFLs will save us 21 quadrillion BTUs over the next 30 years. As the stage-lighting expert Howard Brandston points out, that figure actually includes metal-halide fixtures. Subtract those still-legal lights, and we're left with 15 quads over 30 years—or about 0.013 percent of U.S. energy use—as the burden of continuing to allow incandescent bulbs.

Even that potential savings is too high, for if CFLs truly are superior enough to justify their increased expense—they typically cost three to ten times more than incandescent bulbs—then in an open market some consumers will switch voluntarily, especially employers with workplace lighting conditions closest to ideal for the bulbs.

More, the potential savings don't include the expense and energy required for disposal: The mercury content of a single CFL is small, but that mercury adds up quickly when the nation is using millions of the bulbs a year. It's already illegal to throw the things into the trash in seven states, and hundreds of Chinese light-bulb factory workers have suffered mercury poisoning. (Did I mention that almost all these bulbs will end up being made in China rather than the United States, which, economic costs to the nation aside, will add shipping to the energy burden of production?)

As for what you should do if one breaks in your home—which, it came as a surprise to the Environmental Protection Agency to learn, light bulbs do from time to time—the EPA guidelines read like instructions for fleeing a house in Love Canal. Saving the world, one hazmat suit at a time.

And then there are the changed behavioral patterns demanded of us, the intrusions into the lighting systems that we have grown to expect. CFLs can take up to a minute to reach full illumination. They produce constant ultraviolet and blue light, which can aggravate skin rashes and, anyway, makes most people look like modern versions of Boris Karloff. They don't fit in tight light sockets, they've been known to catch fire when hung upside down in recessed lighting, they make the rest of your electrical appliances stutter when they draw their first burst of power, and they automatically switch on anything that uses an infrared remote control or

sensor. Like your TV channel changer and your cell phone. Oh, they also make polarized window film shimmer with funny little rainbows till your eyes water, and they cause the dyes in expensive fabrics and paintings to decay.

Other than that, they're fine—except, of course, for the fact that people dislike them. Genuinely and truly hate them. We want yellow-based light, not blue-based. Soft light makes us happier, and it makes us prettier. We expect light to behave as the sun does, growing redder as it dims. We want book pages to reflect a golden tinge. The deadening effect of fluorescent bulbs used to

be a standard trope of movies about workplaces (watch *Joe Versus the Volcano* again), but now, somehow, we're mandating the accursed things.

The psychological cost of these bulbs has not yet been calculated. Perhaps it never will be, but here's one guess at a measure: The Department of Energy reports that from 2007 to 2008 the sale of CFLs in the United States *dropped*, despite the fact that CFLs were widely available, routinely advertised as superior, and large consumers like factories and municipalities had the looming enforcement of the energy bill to spur them to switch. It's not that, as a nation, we didn't try compact fluorescent bulbs. We did try them, and we

found them wanting.

And now we're about to be left with only CFLs. How did we get here? *Here*, all the way from a vague notion that pollution is bad to Title 3, Subtitle B, Section 321 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which outlaws the production of incandescent bulbs between 310 and 2,600 lumens, starting with 100-watt bulbs in January 2012 and ending with 40-watt bulbs in January 2014?

The course from Jonathan Edwards's Great Awakening to the Declaration of Independence is a little hazy, and the exact means by which the early-twentieth-century Fundamentalist movement got sidetracked into Prohibition is a little unclear. But it shouldn't be such a mystery for our current symbolic issue of light bulbs. This is *our* story, after all. We've been living it for the last 40 years—ever since those 1970s “public-service announcements” on television that showed an Indian in a canoe weeping at the littering of America.

The two essays in a new pamphlet in the “Voices of the Tea Party” series from Broadside Books—*I, Light Bulb: A Death Row Testimonial* by the editor Michael Patrick

The science of the light-bulb ban is dubious, the economics are a shambles, and the impact on our ‘future and collective health’ is entirely symbolic: more a genuflection toward environmentalism than an actual contribution.

Leahy and *The Disastrous Light Bulb Ban* by Howard M. Brandston—both identify the primary cause as an activist and out-of-control government, manipulated by crony-capitalist corporations: “If you want to find the ultimate roots of the movement . . . it all began when Herbert Hoover was named the Secretary of Commerce under Warren Harding, when he set about organizing manufacturers into cooperative industry organizations.”

In this telling, the otherwise forgotten 1924 “Phoebus Cartel” of light-bulb manufacturers looms large, but the story only really gets rolling with the oil crisis of the 1970s, when Congress decided energy policy lay squarely within its remit and began to pass laws mandating all kinds of usage standards for cars and factories. In those days, of course, the announced purpose was American “energy independence” rather than our currently declared goal of reducing greenhouse gases. But the real motives, say the Tea Party authors, were always the same: a mistrust of ordinary people and an insatiable hunger for increased government. All of which culminated when the 2007 Democrat-dominated Congress (led by Nancy Pelosi, Nanny of the House) set out to do something, *anything*, that expanded government power, changed the nation’s lifestyle, and rewarded the large manufacturers such as General Electric that had supported the Democrats’ election. An inattentive or uninterested President Bush signed the bill, and here we are.

This version of the story is about what one would expect from Tea Party activists, and it’s true enough, as far as it goes. But all it really gives is the mechanism by which we got the light-bulb ban. It describes only how we came to have this *leak*: a kind of retrospective explanation of why the levee broke. But the stuff itself—the muddy water of our current environmental religion—remains a mystery. Worse, these kinds of explanations seem to imply that different political procedures or different economic views about the marketplace would have avoided the light-bulb ban.

Well, actually, different politicians with different economic views probably *would* have done things differently. But if it hadn’t been incandescent bulbs, it would have been something else. The truisms of the nannies, the trite expressions of public morality spraying from the religious weight of environmentalism, will not be denied. One way or another, they force themselves out into the public air. Among Republicans, Fred Upton, the Michigan Republican who chairs the House Energy and Commerce

Committee, is under some attack for having sponsored the amendment that kept the light-bulb ban alive in the 2007 energy bill. George W. Bush is tarred with the same indictment for having failed to veto the bizarre legislation. But, really, those poor men were just trying to do the right thing. They accepted the faux-science of CFLs and the pseudo-economics because they *wanted* to believe. They *wanted* to share in the great public morality of environmentalism, and everyone seemed to be telling them that light bulbs were the way to do it.

In the event, light bulbs *weren’t* the way to do it, but that’s really beside the point. You want to know where the light-bulb ban began? It wasn’t Nancy Pelosi, and it wasn’t Herbert Hoover, and it wasn’t even the shad-

owy Phoebus Cartel, though all who do evil love the darkness. The light-bulb ban was carried forward by the placards about towels in motel rooms. It was nursed at the local coffee shop, where we are lectured in high moral language about how only sustainable coffee beans—gathered, if the illustrations are accurate, on the misty slopes of Ytaiao Mountain by Rima the jungle girl—can redeem us. Saving the planet, one Starbucks at a time.

The demand for CFLs was inculcated at “Earth Day” plays in which grade-school children got to act out the roles of bunnies and butterflies who’ve come to warn us that we must be nice to the Earth. (As James Lileks once noted, those school plays typically end with “a

hymn to nature that makes the Romantic poets look like strip-mining company CEOs.”) The desire to eradicate incandescent bulbs grew up with myths of the Cuyahoga River catching fire and the smog of Los Angeles rolling through the Hollywood Hills like malevolent mud.

The truth or falsity of such things is a trifle, a quibble, a bagatelle. What matters is that they form our national mythology and our cultural worldview. They form our public religion—the one moral vocabulary that can be spoken in this country anywhere and anytime.

Of course, the result is the kind of general feeling that something must be done about it all, and if that *something* is rather pointless—the peculiar rush to legislate 1.6-gallon toilets is a good example—nonetheless we have shown a righteous will by trying. We have the guilt-release of a noble attempt. We have the warm feeling of being on the side of good. We have asserted our standing as children of light, even if rather ineffectual ones. We have followed the sayings of nanny. ♦



Incandescence, we hardly knew ye

The Height of Deception – That “Free Trade” is Good America

Attention All Legislators: PLEASE Do Not Allow the KORUS FTA to Pass!

“Free Trade” is the Single Major Cause of the Destruction of our Manufacturing Base and with it Our Total Economy as Our Present Condition Can Attest To

There are those telling us that “free trade” is good for us, when in reality it has been the single most destructive cause of the demise of our manufacturing base. Many of our legislators, sponsored by special interest groups and multinational corporations, want to force another disastrous “free trade” agreement on us – the KORUS FTA (Korean-U.S. Free Trade Agreement). They are telling us it will export more American goods. In truth, it will mostly export our jobs (not goods as it is deceptively touted).

The KORUS FTA will open the floodgates for massive imports. The U.S. imported 69.1 percent more than we exported between January and April of 2011 alone! The only way for us to compete with poorer countries under “free trade” is to work for \$2 or \$3 per hour. Obviously, we cannot afford to work for such low wages.

Why do we do this to ourselves? Maybe because “free trade” is championed by special interest groups, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. They represent multinational business interests that have made their fortunes by outsourcing our manufacturing. “Free trade” allows these companies to make their products overseas at \$2-\$3 per hour wage rates and then bring their products back here where they make huge profits, while putting our own people out of work.

Our politicians should know better. They should be working for the American people. It is unconscionable to make our manufacturing base uncompetitive. We deceive ourselves by saying “free trade” is a good thing.

The multinationalists have no real ties to the U.S. They deceptively tell us that “free trade” will increase our exports. In reality, “free trade” increases our balance of trade deficit. Just look at the last decade where “free trade” has been the stimulant for the following trade deficits:

- **2000** - \$446.2 billion = \$848,997 per minute
- **2001** - \$421.9 billion = \$802,854 per minute
- **2002** - \$475.3 billion = \$904,385 per minute
- **2003** - \$541.5 billion = \$1,030,335 per minute
- **2004** - \$665.6 billion = \$1,266,421 per minute
- **2005** - \$783.8 billion = \$1,491,250 per minute
- **2006** - \$839.4 billion = \$1,597,139 per minute
- **2007** - \$823.1 billion = \$1,566,195 per minute
- **2008** - \$834.6 billion = \$1,587,998 per minute
- **2009** - \$506.9 billion = \$964,505 per minute

Total: \$6.3 trillion lost in one decade!

These huge balance of trade deficits are the means through which foreign companies accumulate our wealth to buy our best companies. It is easy for them, thanks to “free trade.”

Foreign companies have been able to weaken our companies, as we are unable to compete fairly under “free trade” agreements like NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement) and thanks to biased trade groups like the WTO (World Trade Organization) that has unfairly adjudicated the outcome of disputes attendant with “free trade,” we having lost 9 out of 10 decisions in these disputes, according to Public Citizen. Our trade problems can only be exacerbated by the KORUS FTA (Korean-U.S. Free Trade Agreement) if it gets passed. Foreign companies have taken 16,613 of our best companies between 1978 and 2008 alone (see the list at *Economy InCrisis.org*). This is attributable to the money they have accumulated through our balance of trade deficit, facilitated by “free trade” agreements.

History has proven that American companies and American workers cannot afford the high cost of “free trade.” If the KORUS FTA goes through, it may be the end of the American economy, as we will likely be overwhelmed by foreign exports and see the end of American manufacturing as we knew it.

If the KORUS FTA is approved by Congress it will be the final nail in the coffin of the America economy.

Learn More at ***EconomyInCrisis.org***, Your Economic Report - *Daily*

Economy In Crisis, INC.(614) 210-7255 ext 413



The Princeton Faculty Club

What Price Tenure?

Pretty high, unless you have it. BY HELEN RITTELMAYER

Until it was amended in 1994, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act included an exception for universities, permitting them to set a mandatory retirement age of 70 for tenured faculty. Out of all America's employers, universities were among the handful that Congress worried would be overburdened with seventysomethings not exhausted by decades at their jobs, not enticed by the relaxations of retirement, not removable by some sort of performance review, and yet nowhere near valuable enough to justify their salaries. It's possible that Congress suspected what Naomi Schaefer Riley has tried to prove: that tenured pro-

The Faculty Lounges
And Other Reasons Why You Won't Get the College Education You Pay For
 by Naomi Schaefer Riley
 Ivan R. Dee, 216 pp., \$22.95

fessors have it much too good.

That is the contention of *The Faculty Lounges*, which opens with a *New Yorker* cartoon of a lecturer saying, "Today, class, I'm proud to announce my tenure." He is throwing off his pants. That's about what Riley thinks of the institution of tenure—and among her "reasons why you won't get the college education you pay for," it tops the list.

Tenure is supposed to protect two things: academic freedom and a professor's decent expectation of job security. Academic freedom doesn't

much move Riley, who supposes that "many Americans might wonder why academic freedom is a principle worth defending anyway. Don't some radical faculty members deserve to be run off campus?" Yes, and if you asked a liberal administrator to name one, he'd say Harvey Mansfield.

She notes that instructors of remedial math and basic French do not really need much academic freedom, which is true, but then she claims that science professors do not need much academic freedom, either. Her argument is that science professors must be indifferent to academic freedom, since so many of them are "voluntarily giving it up" by signing strings-attached research deals with corporations. But academic freedom provides valuable shelter to practitioners of low-cash-value "pure science"—and they sur-

Helen Rittelmeyer is an associate editor at National Review.

vive even today, just as they have since corporations first started tempting research scientists with big money, which for the record was decades ago. Besides, academic freedom may be a luxury for some academics, or even most, as free speech is for citizens; that doesn't mean it's not a good bulwark to keep around for the Mansfields who really need it, who surely outnumber the Ward Churchills who abuse it.

Then again, if we measure academic freedom by the ideological diversity it ought to produce, tenure seems to be doing a poor job of protecting it. In fact, it's not hard to imagine that it's doing just the opposite.

Tenure is a long-term commitment, which inclines hiring committees to play it safe. Colleges have a legitimate interest in not hiring professors with awful or embarrassing opinions. But the full symptoms of crankhood do not usually appear until the patient's fifth or sixth decade, so hiring committees must be wary of anyone whose views seem in danger of *becoming* embarrassing later on, and the range of acceptable opinion becomes that much narrower.

More important, tenure makes it hard for professors to move from one institution to another, and someone who so much as lands a *tenure-track* position at a college is unlikely to leave it. This amplifies the peer-pressure effect. If the academic labor market were more mobile, a conservative who discovered that his campus was more uniformly or vehemently liberal than he'd expected could pack up and move somewhere more congenial. As it is, with newly hired Ph.D.s feeling like all their eggs are in one basket, the urge to fit in with one's colleagues is powerful.

As for job security, academics don't

deserve it any more than the rest of us. They might even deserve it less: Their time is entirely unsupervised, they hardly have a boss to speak of, and their job description consists of teaching, which is difficult to evaluate, and research, which can be evaluated only infrequently. That makes four temptations to slack off. Why add a lifetime job guarantee?

The arguments against tenure are persuasive. They were persuasive last time around, too, when Vietnam-era campus radicalism and rioting brought tenure as close to death as it's ever been. But of the 20 anti-tenure bills introduced in state houses in

system, the proportion of incoming students needing remedial math or English is a demoralizing 6 out of 10.) But tenured professors don't want to teach remedial courses; they don't even want to teach introductory courses. So there is a fundamental mismatch between what students need and what tenured professors are offering, which is one reason for the "adjunctification" of college instruction. Administrators seem to prefer hiring outside the tenure track, and if the trend in that direction continues, tenure might be eroded from within by Ph.D.s on multiyear contracts. This seems more likely to deal tenure its death blow than any assault from outside academia.

What if tenure did disappear? Academic freedom would survive, just as it has at West Point, Grove City College, and Bennington. (West Point has a grievance procedure for professors who believe their academic freedom has been violated; it is currently gathering cobwebs.) It's no coincidence that all of these tenureless schools have strong personalities:

military, Christian, hippie. Professors who need to stay in philosophical agreement with their bosses know to pick bosses they find philosophically agreeable. So, in an academia without tenure, more schools might develop in that direction. Professors would feel less secure in their jobs, but they would be spared the breakneck frenzy of those first seven years. Academic fads might be more popular, but they wouldn't get trapped in amber so often. And the faculty would stop lounging. It's difficult to imagine a tenureless academia coming into being tomorrow; but 10 or 15 years from now?

Coeducation was accomplished in a lot less time. ♦



Professor Ward Churchill, 2005

those years, only one passed—and that covered only new hires at Virginia community colleges. Three national reports questioning tenure all fell with a thud. In the decades since then, only 13 independent four-year colleges have ditched tenure. So the real question for Riley isn't why, but why now?

The enrollment explosion is one good reason, because it has made tenure vulnerable. Right now, 70 percent of high school graduates go to college for at least a little while, but this increase in enrollment has predictably led to a dilution of standards. More freshmen means more freshmen in need of remedial instruction. (In the University of California

Suicide by Bomb

Misunderstanding a weapon in the terrorists' arsenal.

BY MAX BOOT

Ah, social science. All those numbers. All those technical terms. How comforting. How reassuring. How *definitive*.

If only.

Case in point: Robert A. Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, who made a big splash with *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (2005). He began

with a sweeping claim to scientific certitude, informing readers, “I have compiled a database of every suicide bombing and attack around the globe from 1980 through 2003—315 attacks in all.” And what did all those numbers prove? That “there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism. . . . Rather what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland.”

His premises validated to his own satisfaction, Professor Pape then segued into what (to him) was surely an unsailable conclusion: “that the sustained presence of heavy American combat forces in Muslim countries is likely to *increase* the odds of the next 9/11.” Rather than embrace “any strategy centering on the transformation of Muslim societies,” he lectured policymakers, “We need to recall the virtues of our tra-

ditional policy of ‘offshore balancing’ in the Persian Gulf and return to that strategy.” In other words, withdraw our troops from the countries where they have been stationed—countries such as

Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—in order to “find a lasting solution to suicide terrorism that does not compromise our core interest in maintaining access to one of the

world’s key oil-producing regions.”

Dying to Win was such a big *succès d’estime* that Pape has followed up with a second book—this one coauthored by James K. Feldman, a professor at the Air Force Institute of Technology—which restates the thesis of the earlier work and extends the research up to 2009. *Cutting the Fuse* comes with even greater trappings of social science than its predecessor. The very first page announces that the research was generated by something called the Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism, which of course has its own acronym (CPOST) as well as a long list of financial backers: “Over several years, funding for these efforts was provided by the University of Chicago Division of the Social Sciences, the U.S. Department of Defense (the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Office of Naval Research), Argonne National Laboratory, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.” An impressive list, which only makes one wonder at the absence of the Ford and MacArthur Foundations and one or two other blue-chip endowments.

The authors then thank a long list of “exceptional young professionals” for (you can almost hear the back-

slapping) going “the extra mile to ensure the high standards required for the CPOST database development, campaign research, and analysis.” Nor is that all. Pape and Feldman claim that “this book is not written from a specific worldview, ideological orientation, or Democratic or Republican program.” Rather it is motivated solely by the “assumption that dispassionate consideration of the facts can create consensus and hope for a new future in American foreign policy.” Unlike the rest of us, Pape and Feldman are totally devoid of any worldview or orientation; they are simply servants of The Truth as determined by the Scientific Method.

This conceit is undermined a bit by the fact that the acknowledgments contain a glowing tribute to John Mearsheimer, who “inspired Bob Pape to pursue a career in social science to better the world, and continues to challenge him to do so.” That would be the same John Mearsheimer who, along with Stephen Walt, authored that notorious anti-Israel—bordering on anti-Semitic—tract known as *The Israel Lobby*, which accused pro-Israel Americans of being Fifth Columnists. While Pape’s books are not nearly as egregious as his mentor’s, he does share with Mearsheimer a proclivity for disguising inflammatory political arguments behind a thin patina of social science which breaks down upon the slightest critical examination.

Start with Pape’s most fundamental claim: that suicide bombers are not the product of Islamic ideology but rather are frustrated nationalists who emerge “from communities resisting foreign military occupation.” If this were the case, it would be hard to figure out why suicide bombing only became a common terrorist tactic in the early 1980s. Why wasn’t it used before by nationalists in Vietnam, Algeria, or other colonial battlefields?

What Pape’s narrative glosses over is the fact that suicide bombing in the modern context was first employed by Hezbollah and its immediate precursors in Lebanon. The very first suicide attack in Lebanon occurred in 1981; the target was the embassy

Cutting the Fuse
The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It
by Robert A. Pape &
James K. Feldman
Chicago, 360 pp., \$30

Max Boot, a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, is the Jeane J. Kirkpatrick senior fellow in national security studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

of Iraq, a country that, to the best of my knowledge, was not occupying Lebanon at the time. Perhaps for this reason the attack goes unmentioned in Pape's database, which lists only attacks by Hezbollah committed on the U.S., Israeli, French, and Lebanese armies. The next major attack occurred in 1982. The target was an Israeli military headquarters in Tyre. The fact that Israel *was* occupying part of Lebanon at the time gives superficial support to Pape's analysis, but we must still ask why Hezbollah resorted to suicide attacks while other terrorist and guerrilla groups also resisting Israeli occupation—for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization prior to the 1990s—did not.

Surely the answer is that Hezbollah was (and is) a fanatical Shiite movement that was inspired by the Iranian revolution, which itself became known for the use of suicidal tactics. During the Iran-Iraq war, tens of thousands of Iranian boys, some as young as 10, were sent to run through minefields in human-wave attacks. They were even given plastic keys to ensure their entry into heaven. Only a political science Ph.D. could doubt that it was religious zeal which inspired them to sacrifice their lives.

While suicide bombing started with Hezbollah, it soon spread to other organizations, including a few secular groups, such as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. Pape makes much of the Tigers' record of suicide attacks to deny any Islamic orientation to this tactic. But by his own count the Tigers killed 1,501 people in suicide attacks over 21 years (1987-2008). That works out to an average of 71 victims a year. The only other major campaign of suicide terrorism mounted by a secular group that Pape cites is the Kurdistan Workers Party

(PKK), which killed all of 43 people in Turkey between 1996 and 2008. Contrast this with the far bloodier record of Islamic suicide bombers from Chechnya to Israel. Pape's database reveals that, since 1981, Muslim groups (not counting the PKK) have accounted for 93.7 percent of all deaths caused by suicide bombers—24,631 out of 26,277. This statistic isn't cited in Pape and Feldman's book, presumably because it is so at odds with their main argument.

could have sacrificed themselves to slay others was because they saw this as a religious obligation.

Moreover, the vast majority of their victims were *not* Americans, Britons, or other "occupiers" but, rather, Iraqis: either members of the security forces or innocent bystanders. For many of the dead, their only crime was to be of the Shiite faith. Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the Jordanian-born head of Al Qaeda in Iraq, nurtured a fanatical hatred of Shiites, whom he referred to



Crater caused by a suicide bomber, Hangu, Pakistan, March 2011

The deadliest campaign of all occurred in Iraq, where suicide bombers murdered 10,655 people in just five years (2003-08). What could have motivated the killers who turned Iraq into a charnel house? If Pape's logic were to be believed, they must have been Iraqi nationalists outraged by American occupation. But Pape's own data show that only about a third of all suicide bombers in Iraq were actually Iraqis. The rest were Saudis, Kuwaitis, Syrians, Jordanians, Yemenis, and other foreigners. Surely they could have had no devotion to Iraq as a national entity. In most cases the first time they ever visited Iraq was on their way to self-immolation. The only conceivable reason they

as "crafty and malicious" scorpions, snakes, rats, and "devils in the bodies of men." He saw it as a religious duty to kill these "apostates." Al Qaeda in Iraq and more secular Sunni insurgents also targeted American troops, but this was mostly by employing improvised explosive devices, not suicide bombs. (Shiite insurgents preferred to use rockets and mortars.) In other words, those who fought the U.S. military most directly did so by employing nonsuicidal tactics. It was only fanatical Salafists who were willing to blow themselves up to make a point, and most of their victims were co-religionists.

This is rather damaging to Pape's thesis. So is the fact that the suicide

bombers in Iraq were not defeated by his preferred strategy of offshore balancing. If taken seriously in the Iraqi context, that would have required a withdrawal of U.S. troops in the face of vicious attacks. One might even argue that, prior to 2007, Generals George Casey and John Abizaid were pursuing a “Papist” approach by trying to move U.S. troops out of population centers. The result, as we know, was more carnage, not less. The suicide bombing threat in Iraq, along with the threat from other types of terrorist tactics (which Pape and Feldman utterly and mysteriously ignore) was reduced more than 90 percent by the application of time-tested counterinsurgency principles. The solution involved not a reduction of U.S. forces (as Pape would advocate) but, rather, an increase in their numbers and a change in their tactics to move into the middle of population centers, thus presumably heightening Iraqis’ sense of being “occupied” which, in the Pape worldview, is the root of all evil.

Israel is another case that resists the pigeonholes into which Pape tries to stuff it. In the first place, Pape and Feldman cite the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade as evidence that suicide bombing is a secular, not an Islamic, phenomenon; but while the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade was set up by Fatah, a secular nationalist organization, it was explicitly religious in orientation. It was named, after all, in honor of the Al Aksa mosque. This was Yasser Arafat’s attempt to co-opt the religious extremism that was being harnessed by Fatah’s rivals in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad; the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigade’s adoption of suicide bombing was very much influenced by their example.

A second error that Pape and Feldman commit is to claim that the Second (or Al Aksa) Intifada was ended by “Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza and part of the West Bank.” Actually it was more nearly the opposite. Israel was able to defeat the suicide bombers because, in April 2002, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and the security cabinet made the decision to send the Israel Defense Forces into areas of the West

Bank that had been ceded to Palestinian control under the Oslo Accords.

As part of Operation Defensive Shield, Israeli troops fought difficult battles in Jenin and other cities. They even besieged Yasser Arafat in his Ramallah compound. These operations were remarkably successful in uprooting terrorist cells that were sending suicide bombers into Israel proper. But those cells would have regenerated themselves if Israeli troops had simply pulled back—as has happened with Hamas and Hezbollah after Israeli troops pulled out of Gaza and southern Lebanon, respectively. Instead of retreating, however, Israeli soldiers and intelligence operatives have remained in the West Bank, and although their presence is less intrusive than it used to be, they still conduct raids every night to arrest suspects. They also actively share intelligence with Palestinian security forces—intelligence they would be hard-put to gather if they did not have a ground presence. The erection of the separation barrier between Israel proper and most of the West Bank also helped by impeding the movement of terrorists. But such a purely defensive response would have proved inadequate were it not for Israel’s continued willingness to stay on the offensive against the terrorists.

Having succeeded in quelling the threat from suicide bombers, the Israeli government then decided to pull out of the Gaza Strip in 2005. Ariel Sharon would never have retreated under fire; so, contrary to Pape and Feldman’s claims, the Gaza disengagement was the result—not the cause—of Israel’s defeat of the suicide bombers of the Second Intifada.

What about Israel’s pullout from southern Lebanon in 2000? Wasn’t this proof of Pape’s thesis that only the end of military occupation can stop suicide bombing? Nope. Suicide bombing had ended long before Israel’s pullout. Hezbollah all but abandoned this tactic after the 1980s, carrying out only three suicide attacks after 1990. By the late 1990s it was strong enough to revert to traditional guerrilla warfare, including

the use of IEDs similar to those that would later take a toll on U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When the Israelis once again invaded Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah did not respond with suicide attacks but with rockets aimed at Israel proper and with skillful guerrilla ambushes aimed at Israeli troops. If suicide bombing is the natural result of military occupation, as Pape seems to imagine, why did Hezbollah give up this tactic which it had practically invented? Surely it was not for lack of suicidal volunteers. Rather, it was because Hezbollah recognized that suicide bombing is not the super-weapon Pape imagines it to be. It is one tool in the terrorist’s arsenal, and not a particularly effective one at that—especially after its initial shock value has worn off.

If the experience of Iraq and Israel punctures holes in Pape’s leaky thesis, the case of Pakistan sinks it altogether. Since the decline of violence in Iraq, Pakistan has emerged as the biggest terrorist killing field in the world—more deadly, even, than Afghanistan. Pape’s own database shows 196 suicide attacks in Pakistan from 2006 to 2010 resulting in 2,622 deaths. But this is only a small part of the tragic tale of a country under sustained assault from vicious jihadist groups. According to the Pak Institute for Peace Studies, over 12,000 people were killed in terrorist attacks in Pakistan between 2006 and 2010. More are dying all the time.

How could this possibly be the case if, as Pape has it, foreign military occupation is needed to spur suicide bombers into action? I am not aware of any foreign army occupying Pakistan. Far from it; much of that country’s frontier region is unoccupied, even by Pakistan’s own army. But Pape is not daunted by a logical obstacle that would send lesser scholars scurrying back to the drawing board. Rather than concede that Pakistan is an exception to his all-encompassing thesis, he gamely tries to shoehorn it in by claiming that, in 2006, when suicide bombings began on a large scale, “the alliance between Pakistan and

the United States evolved into—what is better termed—an indirect occupation.” Got it? Pakistan is occupied by the United States *indirectly*—so indirectly, in fact, that the occupation is not perceptible to anyone other than Robert Pape and James Feldman.

To justify this astonishing claim, they define “indirect occupation” as any instance where one country “dictates . . . strategic priorities” to another country. Since, they claim, “U.S. pressure has shifted Pakistan’s strategic priorities” to turn against the militants, then Pakistan must be under U.S. occupation. To which one can only reply: It would be nice if the United States actually *had* shifted Pakistan’s strategic priorities. But the fact that Pakistan continues to support terrorist groups such as the Haqqani Network and the Taliban which are killing American soldiers—not to mention the probability that elements of the Pakistan establishment winked at Osama bin Laden’s presence in a military garrison town—suggests otherwise.

Pape and Feldman’s problems with defining “military occupation” extend beyond Pakistan. To account for the fact that so many leading terrorists come from countries that haven’t been occupied by the United States (al Qaeda’s longtime number-two, Ayman al Zawahiri, for example, is a native of Egypt), they are compelled to claim that *any* U.S. military presence is tantamount to “occupation.” Thus they offer a list of the following “Sunni countries with U.S. combat operations”: not only Afghanistan and Iraq but also Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, Yemen, Pakistan, and Jordan.

This only makes sense if you adopt the late Osama bin Laden’s definition of “occupation” to mean *any* infidel military presence in Muslim lands. Yet even this expansive definition hardly fits countries such as Libya, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Morocco, which have given rise to numerous suicide bombers in spite of the total absence of American troops on their soil. Libya and Syria are not

even American allies but, rather, our enemies: How could our “military occupation” be responsible for the creation of their terrorist groups?

Pape and Feldman respond that suicide bombers are being driven around the bend by “the implementation of U.S. foreign policies aimed at controlling Muslim countries.” Again, this is to adopt Osama bin Laden’s perspective as reality. Is the United States actually trying to “control” Muslim countries? Isn’t it more accurate to say that we are helping to defend Muslim nations at their own invitation? By focusing so heavily on America’s supposed “occupations,” Pape and Feldman take a very narrow

If suicide bombing is the natural result of military occupation, as Pape seems to imagine, why did Hezbollah give up this tactic which it had practically invented? Surely it was not for lack of suicidal volunteers.

and selective view of terrorist motivations. They thereby ignore the dismal conditions in most of the Middle East, including the lack of political, social, and economic opportunity, which has a lot to do with the making of terrorists.

Most terrorist groups are primarily concerned with toppling homegrown regimes. Isn’t it possible, even likely, that fighting American “military occupation” is only an excuse or a means to an end—as shown by the fact that al Qaeda did not end its attacks on us after we pulled all of our troops out of Saudi Arabia? Alan Krueger, a distinguished economics professor at Princeton (and liberal Democrat), also studied *What Makes a Terrorist*—the title of a nifty little book he published in 2007. He concluded that the single

most important risk factor was not poverty or occupation or anything else but rather “the suppression of civil liberties and political rights. . . . When nonviolent means of protest are curtailed, malcontents appear to be more likely to turn to terrorist tactics.” This explanation is not all-encompassing because some terrorists have arisen in countries such as Britain and France where civil liberties are not suppressed. But on the whole, Krueger’s explanation is a lot more convincing than Pape’s.

I do not mean to suggest that Pape’s work is entirely worthless. The online database of suicide bombings he and his team have assembled seems useful, if limited, insofar as it does not account for the vast majority of terrorist attacks which do not involve suicide bombers. The problem is that the analytic spin he puts on the data is unconvincing and misleading. Even worse, his policy prescription—a shift to a strategy of “offshore balancing”—is just plain dangerous. If the United States were to remove our forces from the Middle East, as he advocates, the result might very well be a short-run decrease in suicide bombings aimed at American personnel. But it would mean an increase in tyranny and violence because it would cede the political playing field to extremists, both Sunni and Shia, from al Qaeda to Iran’s Quds Force. In fact it was the very crumbling of the previous policy of “offshore balancing,” brought about by events such as the 1979 Iranian revolution, Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and al Qaeda’s 9/11 attacks, that compelled greater American engagement in the Middle East.

Pape and Feldman are welcome to make the case for their preferred policies, but they should have the honesty to admit that there is nothing remotely objective about their views. Having read their polemical tome, one might even suspect that their policy prescriptions are the result of—gasp—a “specific worldview” and an “ideological orientation” rather than of a “dispassionate consideration of the facts.” ♦

Future Imperfect

Albert Brooks writes a novel. He should stick to film.

BY ZACHARY MUNSON

Albert Brooks is a comedian and filmmaker. He has now written a novel. The novel is called *2030*, and it is about the future of America. This is how the novel is written. Like this. The way this review is written. In this manner of writing.

If you are not familiar with novels, let me inform you that many novels contain events. I am generalizing here, but when writing a novel, somebody will make up some events in his mind, and then write them down. This is what Albert Brooks does. The events that he writes down are very important. An earthquake destroys Los Angeles. The president of the United States is Jewish. Some young people start a terrorist war against old people. The economy is bad; it is *very, very* bad. Also, the Jewish president sells the destroyed city of Los Angeles to the Chinese. Then the Constitution is amended so the Chinese man who rebuilt L.A. can be elected president. Also, before that happens, the Jewish president has an affair with a 70-year-old woman (his Treasury secretary) and his wife leaves him. And before *that* the president convinces the Treasury secretary to arrange the murder of his comatose mother. And there is a pill that cures weight loss. And there is no cancer.

This is approximately as much information about these events as Brooks provides in his novel. It is 384 pages long.

If I may continue generalizing: In addition to events, novels often have characters. *2030* is no exception. One character is a 20-year-old woman. Another an 80-year-old man. There are many others, with very different occu-

Zachary Munson is a writer in Washington.

2030

The Real Story of What Happens to America
by Albert Brooks
St. Martin's, 384 pp., \$25.99



Albert Brooks, 2011

pations and ages. One is the president. One is a scientist. Etc.

They are all very different and thoroughly developed, according to the narrator. For example, the 70-year-old secretary of the Treasury who sleeps with the president, advises him to sell Los Angeles to the Chinese, and then kills his mother, was

the smartest person in the room. Not flauntingly so. She just was. Prepared, full of facts and ideas, a world-class listener, and a problem solver like a computer.

Or take this example, if you will: The anti-senior terrorist, Max Leonard,

looked like a poster boy for being in shape. And a handsome face. Not movie star handsome, more like Olympic-ski-team handsome.

More important, Max “was not just a charismatic speaker, he knew when to listen.” It is interesting that the narrator has all this information. He must be a truly omniscient narrator, who sees things that are not actually in the book, like events that demonstrate these characteristics.

Anyhoo, with all these very different characters doing all sorts of important things, readers should have no problem not falling asleep while reading this book at two in the afternoon in their home on a Saturday. After all, this book is exciting, and lots of exciting things happen in it when you read it. Much of the story is set in Washington, D.C., and has some very serious political dialogue, such as this true-to-life exchange that takes place in a gay bar between two characters who are in the book for some reason:

“I’m one of the heads of AARP . . .”
“That’s one powerful lobby. I’ve heard my boss bitch about it often, how you can’t get anything done unless AARP signs off.”
“Who’s your boss?”
“Hernandez.”
“Hernandez? At Justice?”
“That’s the one.”
“Wow. Big-time boss.”

The book is also very smart and full of hilarious jokes, like this one that has to be explained after it is delivered:

“Do you think [being Treasury secretary] is something you might be interested in?”
“Yes. It’s something I’ve never thought about, but when you say it, it sounds like it was always my plan.”
“I’ve had that feeling, too” the President said. “I call it *Déjà Beshert*.”
“What is that?”
“I just made it up. *Beshert* is Hebrew for ‘meant to be.’ And ‘*déjà*’ means . . . oh, you know what ‘*déjà*’ means.”

Getting serious again for a moment, this book has an important message about the future. That message is this: If American scientists cure cancer and help old people, we will live in a very bad (but exciting) world full of inexplicable scientific discoveries, and we will all talk as if we are characters in one of Albert Brooks’s less successful movies. This is called satire.

Eyeball to Eyeball

Our guy blinked, with the following results.

BY JAMES DELMONT



Kennedy and Khrushchev, Vienna, June 1961

The timing for this book is exquisite. Fifty years ago this summer, an embattled Soviet leader in a power struggle with an inner-circle hardliner was pushed to offer a young, inexperienced American president an ultimatum—which, if not met, would drastically heat up the Cold War. Nikita Khrushchev, looking over his shoulder at Frol Kozlov and his allies in the Presidium, offered John F. Kennedy an ultimatum on Berlin. And some-

thing similar happened much more recently: Russian president Dmitry Medvedev, looking over his shoulder at Vladimir Putin and his allies, offered an ultimatum to Barack Obama on the building of missile defense shields in

Central Europe, warning that if Russia is not accommodated the Cold War may be renewed.

Frederick Kempe, a veteran *Wall Street Journal* editor and reporter and now

president and CEO of the Atlantic Council, has written an engaging study of the 1961 Khrushchev/Kennedy standoff over Berlin, presenting the drama in the journalistic, anecdotal, episode-by-episode mode made popular

Berlin 1961
Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Most Dangerous Place on Earth
by Frederick Kempe
Putnam, 608 pp., \$29.95

James Delmont is the author of the forthcoming The Great Liberal Death Wish.

by the late Cornelius Ryan (*The Longest Day, The Last Battle*). With a chronology that runs from New Year's Eve 1960 to late October 1961, Kempe provides documentary-style vignettes, ranging from Kennedy's summit with Khrushchev ("Little Boy Blue Meets Al Capone") to ordinary people escaping across the Berlin Wall (including the East German soldier dropping his rifle as he leaps into a famous photograph). This moment-by-moment presentation underlines the urgency of events and makes for a readable narrative.

Kempe's book is the longest second look at the Berlin Crisis in some time—Robert Slusser's study *The Berlin Crisis of 1961* (1973) being its equivalent—although Michael Beschloss widened the topic in 1991 with *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev 1960-63*, in which he judged the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 to be an outgrowth of the Berlin crisis a year earlier, a point Kempe agrees with in a lengthy epilogue ("Kennedy's Berlin crisis had moved to Cuba."). Slusser was mainly interested in establishing that Khrushchev, who had survived a coup attempt in 1957, was not the rampaging dictator fully in charge of an aggression against the West but was under unbearable pressure from Kozlov and his group of hardliners, from Mao in China, and, especially, from the East German leader Walter Ulbricht, a fundamentalist Marxist who combined the discipline of a Calvin with the true-believer convictions of Lenin. Ulbricht was outraged that hundreds of thousands of East Germans were escaping to West Germany from West Berlin, which was open to East Berlin.

Both Kempe and Slusser confine their studies to a 1961 calendar; but the crisis really began in 1958—as Jack Schick made clear in *The Berlin Crisis 1958-1962* (1971)—and the origins go back even further, to the 1948 Berlin airlift when Stalin (then lacking nuclear weapons) tried to cut off West Berlin. Indeed, the real origins go back to World War II, when postwar occupation zones were being arranged. President Franklin Roosevelt, en route to the Tehran conference of 1943, picked up a *National Geographic* map and drew an

enormous American occupation zone in Germany, extending across Northern Germany to Berlin. This large expanse might have made the Berlin crisis impossible. But among other things, a three-power commission (unmindful of FDR's map) agreed in 1944 on occupation zones closely resembling those that actually developed at the end of the war, with Berlin 110 miles within the Soviet zone. Roosevelt objected, but to no avail: Berlin itself was to be occupied by the allies with each having a zone of occupation there.

In March/April 1945, it became apparent that either the British and Canadians (Field-Marshal Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group) or the Americans (General William Simpson's Ninth Army) could make it to Berlin ahead of the Russians, who were meeting fierce resistance east of the capital. Simpson thought he had the go-ahead from General Omar Bradley; but Bradley and the supreme commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, decided to stick with the Allied military objectives and avoid the massive losses endured by the Red Army. Ike told Stalin and Simpson that the Allies were not headed for Berlin, and while a big chunk of what would eventually become East Germany was overrun by Allied troops who drove to the Elbe River, Berlin was not a part of it.

In late 1958, Khrushchev presented an ultimatum to the Eisenhower administration almost identical to the one he thrust at Kennedy in June 1961: Within six months sign a German peace treaty to fix the boundaries of East Germany and end Allied occupation rights in Berlin prior to its transition to "free city" status. Kempe makes the point that Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, were seasoned, mature men not about to be intimidated by Khrushchev. So they ignored the Soviet leader's bluster but indicated

a willingness to negotiate—a process that fell apart in 1960 when the U-2 spy plane was shot down over Russian territory, embarrassing Khrushchev and Eisenhower alike as they arrived for a summit meeting in Paris. Moreover, both Kempe and Beschloss make the corollary point that Kennedy was lacking in the steadiness, wisdom, and experience required for the trial he faced: Kennedy, wrote Beschloss, "lacked Eisenhower's consistency, his determination to avoid alarming the American people . . . his understanding of the arms race and his domestic political strength."



East Berlin seen from the West, 1973

Kempe describes a Kennedy badly shaken by the Bay of Pigs fiasco of April 1961. Most historians now maintain that Kennedy rushed unwisely into an early summit with Khrushchev, in Kempe's view to make up for the Bay of Pigs: "[T]o veteran diplomats, the president's haste looked restless and naïve." In bad health, and rattled by the Cuban disaster, Kennedy was "a weary, wounded commander in chief who was inadequately prepared and insufficiently fit for what would face him." What faced him was the human volcano of the Russian strongman: "Khrushchev's raw energy was overpowering Kennedy's more subtle charms."

Indeed, JFK's much-advertised charm was no more effective with Khrushchev than FDR's charm had

been with Stalin. "This man is very inexperienced, even immature," Khrushchev told his interpreter after the first day of the Vienna summit in June. Kennedy left Vienna battered and verbally beaten, threatened, and bullied—a state he admitted to members of his inner circle in frank language. "Kennedy was in over his head," Kempe writes, describing how the president cried when recalling the event to his brother, Robert. Kempe also considers the state of Kennedy's health, as manifested during the state visit to France just before the Khrushchev summit, closely following Beschloss's descriptions of procaine injections (for excruciating back pains) and amphetamine injections from another. Disagreeing with Robert Dallek—who believes that JFK's health problems did not affect his presidency—Kempe echoes Beschloss in suggesting that they did, in fact, hinder his performance. Kempe calls his chapter on the Bay of Pigs "Amateur Hour" and mentions Kennedy's "greater comfort at appearing tough than

actually being so," concluding that Kennedy's first year in office was "one of the worst inaugural year performances of any modern U.S. president."

Besides a bungled summit and the Bay of Pigs disaster, Kennedy took the fatal steps, within weeks of assuming office, of escalating American involvement in South Vietnam. Kennedy also went public with his panic, calling for large increases in the defense budget and in military manpower. Yet it was the building of the Berlin Wall in August that got him off the hook, a slap in the face that JFK accepted with relief. But not for long: Khrushchev remembered Kennedy's fear of nuclear war, which persuaded him to secretly ship offensive nuclear missiles to Cuba the following year, setting off yet another crisis. ♦

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Say, What?

Movies make plenty of noise, but don't speak to us.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Do movies matter? When I first became interested in them, in the 1970s, they seemed to matter very much indeed. People with cultural interests talked about movies, argued about them, studied them, loved them, emulated them. Highly regarded directors of foreign films—Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, François Truffaut, Akira Kurosawa, Satyajit Ray—attained an elevated cultural standing in the United States that surpassed the poets and novelists and painters among their own countrymen. And small-scale movies that today would be consigned to art houses and tiny grosses and limited runs—*M*A*S*H*, *American Graffiti*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Shampoo*, *Network*, *Coming Home*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, even *The Graduate*—not only provoked general conversation among the chattering classes but became major popular successes.

That doesn't happen any longer. For the most part, moviegoers are uninterested in provocative depictions of the way we live now. Consider *The Hurt Locker*, which won the 2009 Oscar for best picture. Without question, this piece of highly kinetic and suspenseful filmmaking on the literally incendiary topic of an American bomb-defusing squad in Iraq would have been a huge hit in the 1970s. Even in the mid-1980s, Oliver Stone's disgustingly pernicious though admittedly exciting Vietnam melodrama *Platoon* made \$138.5 million. But *The Hurt Locker* earned an astonishingly paltry total of \$17 million.

The year that *The Hurt Locker* won its Oscar saw the release of *Avatar*, which has grossed more money world-

wide than any other movie ever made by a large margin—nearly \$3 billion. When the blockbuster age began in the mid-1970s, the movies that exploded into the marketplace the way *Avatar* did—*Jaws* and *Star Wars*, especially—were basically seen by everybody. People stopped going to the beach out of



fear the summer that *Jaws* premiered, and that summer's cultural echo can be heard 36 years later in every hot-weather story about big fish scoring a human snack, or whenever the Discovery Channel announces it's time for SHARK WEEK.

As for *Star Wars*, it entered the national cultural consciousness within a week of its release in 1977 and has remained lodged there ever since. Three-year-old boys of my acquaintance today who have never seen a frame of any of the films know who Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader are, what a lightsaber is, and the phrase "may the force be with you."

One mark of a work's pop-culture influence is whether the names of its characters move from the screen into the real world, when the young people who loved it have children of their own. Thus, when the TV show *Dynasty* became popular, thousands of babies

came to be named "Krystle" after its lead character. A chart on the website BabyCenter.com indicates that the name Luke was barely in use before *Star Wars* and then took a vertiginous climb into the top 50, where it has remained ever since.

But what of *Avatar*? Its heroine is named Neytiri—gorgeous, lithe, sexy, brave, noble, though with blue skin and a tail. The name sounds fun and exotic, and given *Avatar*'s astounding box-office take, should have made the same transition from screen to Social Security baby list as Krystle and Luke. It didn't. According to Baby Center, Neytiri was the 25,501st most popular name for girls in the United States last year.

What happened? Or rather, what didn't happen? Simply this: *Avatar* didn't *matter*. Some of that is due to its failings as a work of popular art, which I believed at the time and believe even more now are colossal. But it also says something about the fact that movies have so little to say to us now that audiences no longer engage with them as they once did. They do not expect to be drawn in—and they aren't. The movies they have been trained to attend for decades are contrivances, amusement park rides, seemingly designed to be disposable, forgettable, pointless.

It has become a commonplace to say that television series now serve the role movies once did in the cultural consciousness, but with the possible exception of *The Sopranos* and *Sex and the City*, none of the gripping and gritty programs that most closely evoke the movies of the 1970s has an audience anywhere near the size of a hit picture from the time, much less a television show of the time.

I don't know that there was anything especially noble or praiseworthy about how movies mattered back when I was a kid. Their enthusiastic depictions of casual sex and extreme violence and their dismissal of traditional mores leached into the aquifer and helped create the poisoned swamp that now offends the sensibilities of culturally interested people across the political spectrum—the swamp in which the *Jersey Shores* and the *Saws* flourish.

But at least they were *better*. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.

"Many Americans fear the end of the shuttle program means the United States is relinquishing its leadership in human space flight, after past decades of fierce Cold War rivalry with the Soviet Union. A poll released by CNN on Thursday showed most Americans think their country should play a dominant role in space exploration." —Reuters, July 21, 2011

PARODY

JULY 25, 2011

ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

OBAMA ASSURES AMERICANS HE CARES ABOUT SPACE

Plans Include Rocket, More Planetariums

By KENNETH CHANG

At a lavish DNC fundraising dinner inside the Rose Center for Earth and Space, President Obama told guests that space exploration remains a top priority for his administration. "I know some of you think we've quit space just because we retired the shuttle," said the president. "Not true. We are building a rocket that one day will lift people into orbit." Mr. Obama tempered expectations, however, saying that the mission will take time. "First, this rocket will be unmanned. Then, we'll probably use animals. And finally, we will launch humans. You heard me right—humans in space. Yes, we can!"

The guests, who each paid \$10,000 to attend, applauded the president for his courage. NASA administrator Charles Bolden also assured the audience that "the race is still on. You simply can't measure progress by how far we travel in outer space. You can do as much through telescopes, planetariums,.... books."

Last week, the Russian government announced the beginning of "the era of Soyuz"—American astronauts will now rely on Russian rockets to take them to the International Space Station. When asked about the statement, the president said, "I applaud them and wish



As a sign of his commitment to space exploration, President Obama will dress up as an astronaut this Halloween.

them well because, in fact, there is no space race—only space friendship." In response, Russian ambassador Andrei Lysenko told the Times, "He is so funny, your president. Funny and weak."

As a reminder that Mr. Obama still cares about the space program, guests were served freeze-dried ice cream for dessert. "I bet the Russians don't have

anything as good as this," said the president. On a more serious note, Vice President Biden told guests we mustn't rush into things. "Remember how we were in such a hurry to get to the moon? And as a result we almost lost Tom Hanks and the guy from 'Foot-

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While City Sizzles, Bloomberg Keeps Cool

Mayor Co-Owns Fortress of Solitude

the weekly
Standard

AUGUST 1, 2011